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Education

23rd ANNUAL
Indy Hematology Review™
March 6-7, 2026

Indy Hematology Review Journal

2026

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Reference: 1. *Q1 2025 Results: Conference Call and Webcast for Investors and Analysts*. BeOne Medicines; May 7, 2025. Accessed May 7, 2025. https://ir.beigene.com/media/document/cd583ffc-74f2-465e-8cdc-d3489d607cc3/assets/BeOne_Q1_2025_Earnings_Deck_FINAL.pdf

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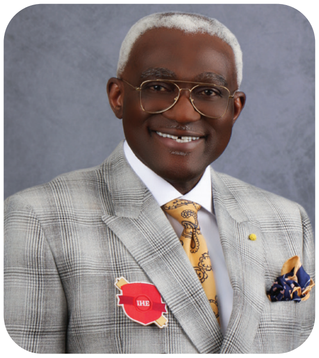
CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Et tu Brute?



Looking across the room, deep in thought, with a whirlwind of ideas, reviewing emerging clinical data and current treatment guidelines, she walks across the room, pacing at times, with a faint smile, ultimately coming to stop and holding his hand. She looks at his face; his brown eyes are piercing, and she locks in and speaks deliberately and honestly, discussing the diagnosis, the prognosis, and treatment options and guidelines. He is relieved that there may be a fighting chance, appreciates her warmth and honesty and how she very deliberately discusses his treatment recommendations while referring to the latest treatment guidelines. A breakthrough occurs as she sighs heavily and announces her intention to proceed with treatment.

The scenario described above occurs every day in our clinics, based on a mutual trust between us and the people we care for. Our practice is built on a foundation of duty, powered by trust, and refined with love. Betrayal would shatter this relationship into a thousand pieces, akin to the piercing knife of Brutus.

Our fiduciary responsibility as treating practitioners demands that we remain fully educated and versed in the latest medical data to be fully equipped to look after those under our care. We are so implored, and it is our moral and ethical responsibility to do so.

Thank you to our attendees for fulfilling the first part of this obligation by attending the Indy Hematology review weekend. Over the past 23 years our offerings have grown and learning opportunities have soared. We are proud to say we have educated more than 10,000 people and counting. Our reach is global and extends from one shining sea to the other, across the deserts of Arabia and the rain forests of Africa, and through cities, villages, and settlements across the globe. Your support has been vital to promoting and expanding medical education to all. For this, we are grateful and hopeful for a future that continues to break through barriers and improve survivorship in cancer and blood diseases through your continuing support.

However, our work is far from complete, for we cannot betray the foundational mutual trust with our patients. To be true to them we must understand the potential for therapeutic misappropriations and be honest in addressing the applicability of data to the persons that sit in front of us. Data applicability and our understanding of these intricacies are the new frontier for improving clinical outcomes for all who trust us to provide care.

Finally, thank you to our most esteemed faculty of whom we are extremely proud, and particularly to our Steve Coutre Hematology Innovation Lecturer, Dr. Tracy Batchelor, and our keynote speaker, Professor Martin Dreyling who has travelled all the way from Germany to join us for the weekend, and to all our ever-loyal, world-leading faculty.

Please join us on March 12, 2026, for our 24th Annual Indy Hematology Review® meeting.

Thank You,

Sincerely,

Ruemu E. Birhiray

Ruemu Ejedafeta Birhiray, MD

The Anchor Behind the Review, a Portrait of Donna Birhiray, OT, MBA

Written by Nicola Donelan

For over two decades, the Indy Hematology Review has been a staple of the National medical community. While Dr. Ruemu Birhiray is the visionary at the podium, the engine room of this 23-year legacy is powered by his wife, Donna Birhiray, OT, MBA

The Evolution of The Indy Hematology Review

The Indy Hematology Review began not with a grand strategic plan, but with a simple conversation. Dr. Birhiray and a pharmaceutical representative were discussing a common frustration that community clinicians often lacked the time to step away from their practices for five-day national conferences, yet they were hungry for the "cutting-edge" emerging therapies that could save their patients. Donna remembers those humble beginnings at the Conrad Hotel in downtown Indianapolis, where the main ballroom had a capacity of just 150 people. Fast forward 23 years, and the meeting has blossomed into a sophisticated educational ecosystem. Under the umbrella of Indy Hematology Education (IHE) Inc., the organization now manages nearly a dozen distinct offerings, from the "Drive Initiative" to quarterly grand-round style meetings. Having far surpassed their goal of 500 attendees, the conference is currently in the enviable position of outgrowing its venue once again.

This growth is a testament to the spirit of the IHE. We are "never satisfied" and always "pushing the envelope" to better educate and serve our community." In 10 years from now, Donna would like to see the meeting far surpass 900+ attendees. Beyond just the numbers, her vision for the future involves expanding the footprint of the conference. She expressed a desire to take the "Indy Hematology" model on the road, bringing these intense, high-quality educational offerings to community clinicians on the East and West Coasts who may not be able to travel to the Midwest.

Building a Legacy from the "Grandma-Powered" Days

Donna recalls the early years when the couple's children were young. The conference wasn't just a professional milestone; it was a family endurance test. To allow Donna to be on-site at the annual meetings, her mother would come to watch the kids." My mother traveled from Chicago every year to support my participation and the successful execution of the meeting. Her support was instrumental in allowing me to build the IHE legacy," emphasized Donna.
Today, that family bond has become the conference's backbone, and the cycle of "pouring into" the next generation continues. The legacy has come full circle as Donna recently became a grandmother for the first time herself, deepening her appreciation for the family ties that keep the Indy Hematology Review thriving.

Their children are now integral parts of the "IHE umbrella":

- The Artist: Their eldest daughter has presented at the meetings on art therapy for cancer patients.
- The Advocate: Their younger daughter, who began attending the exhibitor hall at age eight, now speaks on diversity, equity, and the DRIVE initiative.
- The Strategist: Their son keeps a keen eye on the business and financial sustainability of the organization to ensure its longevity.

Achieving Tomorrow's Outcomes Through Education Today

Donna Birhiray has 30 years of experience as an occupational therapist, and an MBA from Anderson University. "The MBA program fueled my passion for developing the critical skills necessary to oversee the smooth operation of our organization," stated Donna. Donna also ensures that the Indy Hematology Review is rooted in humanity rather than just medical credits. She advocates for a "humanitarian level" of care, exemplified by the Evening with the Experts program, which demystifies healthcare for patients and empowers them to become active participants in their treatment. As Donna puts it, "Everything that you need to know, it's not going to be in that textbook." She explains, "if you can step out of self sometimes, and connect with someone on a human level to understand what they may be experiencing then you would understand, because you want to do unto others as you'd have them do unto you."

Managing this complex mission as a volunteer, Donna balances passion with a sharp sense of wit, often joking, "I work hard for no money!" While Dr. Birhiray provides the "non-stop engine of ideas," Donna serves as the essential logistical "reality check," reining him in to ensure every ambitious project is actually feasible. By fostering personal relationships and maintaining a focus on patient literacy, she ensures the organization lives up to its core promise: "Achieving tomorrow's outcomes through education today."

A Coffee or a Coke: The Power Couple Meets and the Rest is History

While many attendees wonder what the famously fashionable Dr. Birhiray will wear to the next meeting, have you ever wondered how the Nigerian-born physician with a British English flair and the Chicago-born occupational therapist met?

It started 30 years ago in a Chicago hospital elevator. The young Dr. Birhiray, quick on his feet, noted that Donna looked like she was in a particularly good mood that day and asked her out for a cup of coffee. "I don't drink coffee," Donna replied flatly. Undeterred and "quick on his feet," the doctor countered: "Well, I'll have coffee, and you can have a Coke." She didn't give him her number when he asked. She replied, "I don't give out my number, but I'll take yours," and she didn't call him for weeks. But when she finally did, they met for that Coke. Three decades, three children, one grandchild, and 23 years of Indy Hematology later, the Birhiray legacy has found its perfect synthesis, blending professional education, patient advocacy, compassion, and deep-rooted family values.

IHE
TREASURER
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Donna

Dr. Ruemu Birhiray and Mrs. Donna Birhiray

3 ways to contact Indy Hematology Review

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general@indyhematology.org

463.273.6270

DRIVE Agenda Friday, March 6th, 2026

6:30 AM – 7:00 AM	**Registration and Continental Breakfast**
7:00 AM – 7:10 AM	**Putting the DRIVE Score into the Hands of Clinicians** Ruemu E. Birhiray, MD, Clinical Professor of Medicine; Marian University - Wood College of Osteopathic Medicine
7:10 AM – 7:25 AM	**Strategies for Promoting Clinical Trial Relevancy in Target Populations** Andrew Hantel, MD, MPH Assistant Professor of Medicine; Harvard Medical School
7:25 AM – 7:40 AM	**The MAGIC of Multiple Myeloma Screening in Eastern African Communities** Joselle Cook, MD Assistant Professor of Medicine; Mayo Clinic
7:40 AM – 7:55 AM	**Q/A and PANEL DISCUSSION**
7:55 AM – 8:10 AM	**Does Biodiversity Matter When Developing Clinical Trials?** Matthew Lunning, DO, FACP Interim Chief, UNMC Division of Hematology; University of Nebraska Medical Center
8:10 AM – 8:25 AM	**Creating and Applying Clinically Relevant Eligibility Criteria in Trial Development** Chijioke Nze, MD, MPH Assistant Professor in Department of Lymphoma / Myeloma; MD Anderson Cancer Center
8:25 AM – 8:35 AM	**Q/A and PANEL DISCUSSION**
8:35 AM – 8:50 AM	**Designing for Equity: The Legal Framework for Inclusive Clinical Trials** Medha Makhlouf, JD Founding Director of the Medical-Legal Partnership Clinic; Penn State Dickinson Law and Department of Public Health Sciences, Penn State College of Medicine
8:50 AM - 9:05 AM	**Matching Cancer Treatments to Clinical Data: A Public Policy Perspective** Jerome Adams, MD, MPH Former Surgeon General; United State of America
9:05 AM - 9:25 AM	**Leveraging Our Medical Community to Promote Inclusive Clinical Trials** Belinda Avalos, MD Immediate Past ASH President; American Society of Hematology
9:25 AM - 9:35 AM	**The Missing Population in Global Oncology Registration Trials: Africa's Evident Need and Opportunity** Omar Abdihamid Ahmed, MD Clinical Oncologist; Garissa Regional Cancer Center, Kenya
9:35 AM – 9:50 AM	**Q/A and PANEL DISCUSSION**
9:50 AM – 10:10 AM	**Reducing Bureaucracy in Clinical Trials: A Global Coalition** Martin Dreyling, MD Professor of Medicine; Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich
10:10 AM – 10:30 AM	**Advancing Inclusive Research with Roche/Genentech Population Sciences** Mitch D'Rozario, PhD, MPH(c) Population Health Dashboard Analytics Lead; Genentech
10:30 AM – 10:45 AM	**Vox Medica: A DRIVE Approach to Medical Publication** Catherine Lai, MD, MPH Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine (Hematology-Oncology); University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine
10:45 AM – 11:00 AM	**Atlas and Nexus: The Role of the Statistician in Promoting Clinical Trial Representativeness** Todd Burus, PhD, MASc Assistant Professor of Biomedical Informatics; University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center
11:00 AM – 11:15 AM	**Q/A and PANEL DISCUSSION**

DRIVE Agenda Friday, March 6th, 2026

11:15 AM – 11:30 AM	**Access and Affordability in Healthcare For Those Most in Need** Karla Goins, MBA Founder & Principal Advocate; AdVICE Group LLC
11:30 AM – 11:50 AM	**Rural Health Matters: Ensuring No Community is Left Behind** Electra Paskett, PhD, FACE Marion N. Rowley Chair in Cancer Research; The Ohio State University
11:50 AM – 12:10 PM	**DRIVEing the Next Generation of Medical Researchers and DRIVE Expansion** Maya Birhiray, MS and Sam Ranger, MS Medical Student, Chief Program Officer; Indiana University School of Medicine, Indy Hematology Education
12:10 PM – 12:25 PM	**Q/A and PANEL DISCUSSION**
12:25 PM – 12:55 PM	**Open Discussion on Strategies Moving Forwards**
12:55 PM – 1:00 PM	**Closing Remarks and Thank You**
1:00 PM – 1:30 PM	**Luncheon**

About DRIVE and Sponsors/Supporters

D.R.I.V.E. is Indy Hematology Education, Inc.'s strategic framework for promoting representative enrollment and inclusive excellence in clinical trials. To support this framework, IHE hosts the annual D.R.I.V.E symposium, a national CME-accredited educational program designed to equip oncology professionals, researchers, and patient advocates with practical tools to explore the current challenges and strategies in advancing inclusive excellence across the cancer research continuum.

This initiative addresses the inherent safety and efficacy concerns that arise when studies are conducted in populations that do not reflect the different patient groups these treatments are intended to serve. Generalizability and transportability are critical for ensuring equitable and effective care. To uphold these principles, we define "clinical trial excellence" as studies that successfully meet these diversity and representation benchmarks.

Despite growing awareness, most clinical trials remain unrepresentative, resulting in data gaps that disproportionately affect minoritized populations. Historical migration patterns, systemic inequities, and biological factors such as genetic polymorphisms and microbiome diversity all contribute to varied treatment responses across different racial and ethnic groups. Current trial designs often fail to account for these differences, resulting in regulatory approvals based on non-generalizable data.

Dr. Ruemu Birhiray with ASH President Dr. Belinda Avalos at the ASH Annual Meeting 2025

IHE provides the annual D.R.I.V.E symposium, which directly addresses these challenges by convening expert speakers from diverse backgrounds across the field of oncology. Attendees will engage with leaders discussing policy-aligned models for accountability, tools for building diverse plans into clinical trial design, and methods for standardizing demographic reporting in academic publication.

With a focus on practical implementation, the D.R.I.V.E. Initiative offers a blueprint to help institutions, sponsors, and investigators align with regulatory guidance, such as the U.S. FDORA Act of 2022, while advocating for its broader international adoption of inclusive research standards. This project goes beyond awareness to action, supporting stakeholders committed to improving the scientific rigor, equity, and impact of cancer research.

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INDY HEMATOLOGY EDUCATION
DECLARATION OF MAUI

Principles for Promoting Excellence in Clinical Trials: Focus on Lymphoma and Multiple Myeloma Clinical Research

Recommendations Proposed for Adoption at the DRIVE Lymphoma and Myeloma Investigators Summit
at the Pan-Pacific Lymphoma Conference, Maui, HI
July 2024

Executive Summary

Significant improvements have been documented in the treatment outcomes of patients with lymphoma and multiple myeloma. However, survival outcomes for women and underrepresented racial/ethnic groups remain consistently lower than for men or non-minorities, despite both institutional and national efforts to standardize outcomes for all patients [1, 2, 3, 4]. There is an urgent need for equitable representation for clinical trials in lymphoma and multiple myeloma, and research shows that underrepresentation of the populations in need continues [5, 6]. Underrepresentation of certain populations undermines the external validity of clinical trials. If a study's population is not a representative sample of the patient's being treated, this can reduce confidence that the treatment is safe and effective for all patients. External validity relies on two critical principles: generalizability, and transportability [7]. Generalizability refers to the ability to make an inference on the average treatment effect from a possibly biased sample of the target population back to the full target population. Transportability refers to being able to make an inference of the treatment effect for a target population when the study sample and the target population do not overlap. Excellence in clinical trial data can be achieved when these two principles are prioritized. Some laws and guidance, such as the FDA Omnibus Act (FDORA) of 2022 and the AACR/FDA guidelines of 2021, aim to address these inequities [8, 9]. However, gaps still exist within this guidance, particularly around inclusive participation, stakeholder roles, and consequences for non-compliance. This is particularly important in diseases like lymphoma and multiple myeloma where historically, certain populations have been both underrepresented and have a higher disease incidence.

Consequently, the non-profit organization Indy Hematology Education (IHE) has convened an international group of experts at the 2024 Pan Pacific Lymphoma Conference in Maui, Hawaii for a meeting called the DRIVE Lymphoma and Myeloma Investigators Summit. With the purpose to reach consensus on affirming existing guidance and recommendations to promote excellence in clinical trials. To facilitate this consensus, the IHE developed the Declaration of Maui that outlines recommendations for promoting generalizability and transportability in lymphoma and myeloma clinical research. These recommendation guidelines were influenced by previously published research from Birhiray (2023), Gormley et al. (2021), and Harkins et al. (2022) [9, 10, 11]. Signatories of this declaration believe that clinical researchers should enact principles and policies that enhance access to and participation in clinical trials for underrepresented groups. The Declaration of Maui is intended to be a living document, debated, and adopted by all involved to foster excellence in clinical research. Since tailored strategies are often the most effective at addressing challenges in equity and inclusion, these recommendations are not all-inclusive or binding. Each of us, as researchers, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and individuals involved in clinical research and public health, plays a crucial role in promoting equity of opportunity in clinical research, and are encouraged to adapt the recommendations to address regional and cultural differences. Although this Declaration is targeted towards lymphoma and multiple myeloma clinical researchers, the IHE encourages other participants in cancer research to also adopt these principles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Section 1. Adopt the DRIVE strategy for clinical research:

I. D: Appoint a DRIVE Officer (DO) for clinical trial excellence who is responsible for establishing, maintaining, and modifying a representative study plan.
a. Sponsors should appoint an independent Principal DO (PDO) as a steering committee level officer, separate from the Principal Investigator (PI).
b. An institutional DO should be appointed at each institution and could be responsible for multiple clinical studies.
c. The role of the DO should be consistently defined, and training should be provided to sponsors and investigators to clarify the qualifications and responsibilities of a qualified DO.

II. R: Measure the relative representation of participants in a clinical trial, using the DRIVE ranking system. The overall score of a trial should then be included within any future publication about the study.
a. Assign a DRIVE ranking score to clinical studies, based on the enrollment of underrepresented patient groups, relative to the disease epidemiology.
b. Conduct interim scoring during recruitment to evaluate interventions to address participant representation issues, identify underperformance, assess implementation of remediation strategies, and review Data and Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) reporting.
c. Use aggregated scores, such as the median score across trials, to evaluate representation at each study site.
d. Scoring should be mandatory for all pivotal studies or those enrolling fifty or more participants.

III. I: Implement a tailored representative study plan.

a. Investigators should develop individualized study plans using disease epidemiology, with pre-defined endpoints within demographic subgroups, allowing for remedial post-approval studies for underperforming pre-approval trials. Strategies may include:

i. Establishing specific enrollment targets based on disease epidemiology, aiming to achieve the predetermined representative target within the trial. This includes outlining plans to meet the target in the post-approval phase if the goal is not reached during preapproval trials. If real-world data is utilized, sponsors should specify the analyses that will incorporate this data, considering the absence of randomization to manage unknown confounders.

ii. Setting predefined analyses and endpoints to be evaluated in specific subgroups, modeling the impact of having more or fewer patients than anticipated for a given subgroup, and exploring potential alternative endpoints that may be more easily interpreted within these subgroups.

iii. Combine data from cooperative group studies / the pharmaceutical industry to gather enough information to conduct efficacy and safety analyses for underrepresented subpopulations.

b. Strategies to enroll and retain historically marginalized populations may include:

i. Broadening eligibility criteria (discussed in more detail in Section 2)

ii. Establishing partnerships through community outreach and implementing cultural humility plans

iii. Addressing unconscious biases

iv. Translating participant-facing documents into multiple languages

v. Providing peer-support for potential enrollees, for example, sharing patient trial experiences to alleviate potential fears about trial participation

vi. Offering participant compensation and reimbursement

vii. Decentralizing trials to reach rural and frontier populations

viii. Having protocols reviewed by patient/community advocates to remove barriers or oppressive practices

ix. Collaborating with patient advocacy groups to foster trust and enhance participation in trials and registry studies

IV. V: Verify the transportability and generalizability in clinical research studies, preferably based on an independent report by a DRIVE Officer not involved in the trial.

a. A PDO not involved in the study should verify and report on DRIVE ranking scores.

b. Rank scores ≥3 should be required to be included within publication in high impact journals, and within oral or poster presentations at major medical meetings.

c. Implementation of DRIVE ranking scores should be done in phases to ensure quality control, and its impact used to measure effectiveness.

V. E: Elevate and enhance an unbiased clinical research team through training.

a. Strive for broad socio-demographic representation in study leadership, including steering committees, DSMB, PIs, IRBs, authorship, peer reviewers, editorial boards, and editors-in-chief.

b. Promote an unbiased clinical and research team through funding mechanisms that enhance the training and recruitment of team members who are representative of the target population, via scholarships, grants, and mentorship programs.

Section 2. Adopt the following strategies for reducing eligibility criteria barriers for clinical research:

I. Ensure that eligibility criteria for studies only includes clinically significant benchmarks. Exemplifying the utility of this strategy, principal investigators of the Lymphoma Epidemiology of Outcomes (LEO) cohort study (NCT02736357) have adopted streamlined eligibility criteria with the goal of improved representation in lymphoma clinical trials.

II. Criteria that have been found to be potentially unnecessary (and could serve as a barrier for participant inclusion within studies) are described in more detail here:

a. CD20 positivity: While CD20 positivity assessment is standard for diagnosis, it should not be an eligibility criterion for first-line clinical trials unless the investigational drug specifically requires CD20 positivity for efficacy.

b. CD38 and BMCA: Both CD38 and BMCA are universally expressed in myeloma malignant cells and should not be a criterion for study eligibility unless an additional scientific rationale is provided.

c. Central pathology review, prior to enrollment

d. History of other malignancies: Exclusion should be based only on active malignancies that require treatment precluding study drug administration or malignancies likely to be fatal during the trial evaluation period.

e. History of stroke or intracranial hemorrhage: Participants should only be excluded if the experimental drug increases the risk of future cerebrovascular accidents (CVA) and if the event occurred within the past 6 months.

f. Psychiatric illness: Exclude participants only if the individual cannot comply with study protocols, demonstrate decision-making capacity, or participate in informed consent (unless consent is provided by a legally authorized representative).

g. HIV status: Participants with adequate viral suppression and disease control should be considered eligible, with appropriate evaluation and monitoring for potential drug-drug interactions with experimental therapies.

h. HBV status: Although HBV testing should be performed as part of standard clinical practice, HBV infection should not preclude trial enrollment. Those with adequate viral suppression and disease control should be considered eligible, with appropriate evaluation and monitoring for potential drug-drug interactions with experimental therapies.

i. HCV status: Although HCV testing should be performed as part of standard clinical practice, HCV infection should not preclude trial enrollment. Those with adequate viral suppression and disease control should be considered eligible, with appropriate evaluation and monitoring for potential drug-drug interactions with experimental therapies.

j. Duffy null phenotype: Do not preclude trial enrollment for patients with an absolute neutrophil count <1500 cells/μL.

Section 3. Key Stakeholder Responsibilities and Consequences of Noncompliance

I. Key stakeholders, including study sponsors, researchers, professional oncology medical societies, patient advocacy organizations, regulatory agencies such as the FDA and European Medicines Agency (EMA), and the International Council for Harmonization (ICH), are recommended to create specific roles and responsibilities to promote generalizability and transportability in clinical research.

II. Specific consequences are recommended for studies that do not comply with these goals. Investigators should include a statement on the non-achievement of the desired clinical excellence goals in any resulting publication or presentation. The reasons for failure to reach the intended goals and additional steps to bridge the resultant data gap should be addressed. Furthermore, studies failing to meet their goals should not be prioritized for publication or presentation at conferences.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

In conclusion, we remind all signatories of the Declaration of Maui that this document is intended to be a living document, debated, and adopted by all involved to foster excellence in clinical research. Therefore, this Declaration will be updated regularly in the future to align with the most current guidelines on clinical research.

OUR PLEDGE

We pledge to strive for excellence in clinical research, advocate for equity of opportunity in clinical trial participation, and hold each other accountable in our mission to develop safer and more efficacious treatments for all by following the recommendations outlined herein.

Maui Declaration

DRIVE Score
Internal Validity Survey

DRIVE Score
Clinical Relevancy Survey

Declaration of Maui
References

Declaration of Maui
Inaugural Signatories

DRIVE CME

Continuing Education

Needs – Multiple topics in Hematology, on the diagnosis and treatment of cancers healthcare providers will see in practice. Review the agenda for specific topics.

Learning Objectives (ACCME, ANCC, ACPE) – Upon completion of this activity, the participant should be able to:

1. Analyze how underrepresentation in oncology clinical trials impacts the generalizability of outcomes, therapeutic efficacy, and equitable application of research findings in clinical practice.
2. Interpret and apply current regulatory and policy frameworks, including FDORA and global equivalents, to integrate strategies into inclusive clinical trial design and reporting.
3. Apply interprofessional and cross-sector collaboration models to expand investigator networks, strengthen community partnerships, and improve participant recruitment in historically underrepresented regions and populations.
4. Evaluate the ethical, legal, and statistical considerations that influence equitable clinical trial design, eligibility criteria, data collection, and analysis.
5. Develop and implement institutional or departmental action plans that embed inclusive research practices, investigator training, and accountability measures into oncology research programs.

Joint Accreditation Statement – In support of improving patient care, this activity has been planned and implemented by the Postgraduate Institute for Medicine and Indy Hematology Education. Postgraduate Institute for Medicine is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

DRIVE Faculty (Subject to change)

- Ruemu Birhiray, MD
- Andrew Hantel, MD, MPH
- Omar Abdihamid Ahmed, MD
- Joselle Cook, MD
- Medha Makhlouf, JD
- Matthew Lunning, DO, FACP
- Chijioke Nze, MD, MPH
- Jerome Adams, MD, MPH
- Martin Dreyling, MD
- Belinda Avalos, MD
- Mitch D'Rozario, PhD, MPH(c)
- Catherine Lai, MD, MPH
- Todd Burus, PhD, MASc
- Karla Goins, MBA
- Electra Paskett, PhD, FACE
- Maya Birhiray, MS
- Sam Ranger, MS

Please complete the evaluation to receive CE credit

SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION – In order to receive CE, all participants must attend the entire Symposium from 7:00 am – 1:00 pm AND complete a Post-Evaluation.

Americans with Disabilities Act – Event staff will be glad to assist you with any special needs (i.e., physical, dietary, etc). Please contact Sam Ranger prior to the live event at (463) 316-2050 or email general@indyhematology.org.

Physician Continuing Medical Education – The Postgraduate Institute for Medicine designates this live activity for a maximum of 6.5 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™*. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Nurses Accreditation Statement – The maximum number of hours awarded for this Continuing Nursing Education activity is 6.5 contact hours.

Continuing Pharmacy Education – Postgraduate Institute for Medicine designates this continuing education activity for 6.5 contact hour(s) (6.5 CEUs) of the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education.
Universal Activity Number - **Not yet determined**
Type of Activity: **Application**

Disclosure of Financial Relationships – Postgraduate Institute for Medicine (PIM) requires faculty, planners, and others in control of educational content to disclose all their financial relationships with ineligible companies. All identified financial relationships are thoroughly vetted and mitigated according to PIM policy. PIM is committed to providing its learners with high quality accredited continuing education activities and related materials that promote improvements or quality in healthcare and not a specific proprietary business interest of an ineligible company.

All relevant conflicts of interest will have been mitigated prior to the start of the activity. – The PIM planners and others have nothing to disclose. The Indy Hematology Education planners and others have nothing to disclose.

All relevant financial relationships have been mitigated.

In order to obtain your CE certificate, please go to indyhematology.org/drive and select the link to view step-by-step CE instructions. This link will be available following the event.
The evaluation will open on Saturday, March 7, 2026 at 11:59 PM

CONCERT Agenda Friday, March 6th, 2026

1:00 PM – 1:30 PM	**Luncheon**
1:30 PM – 1:45 PM	**ROCK 'N' ROLLing the BLUES: Strategies for T-cell Redirection in Community Oncology** Ruemu E. Birhiray, MD Clinical Professor of Medicine; Marian University - Wood College of Osteopathic Medicine
1:45 PM – 2:05 PM	**Managing the Patient with Relapsed Lymphoma with T-cell Redirection Therapy: Leveraging Data and Best Practices in Community Oncology** Lorenzo Falchi, MD Assistant Attending Physician; Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
2:05 PM – 3:00 PM	**Product Showcase - Johnson and Johnson Innovative Medicine - Making the Case for Early Use of CAR-T Therapy in Multiple Myeloma** Attaya Suvannasanka MD Clinical Professor of Clinical Medicine, Department of Medicine, Division of Hematology/Oncology; IU School of Medicine
3:00 PM – 3:20 PM	**Understanding and Managing Immune Effector Therapy in Multiple Myeloma: When You CAR-T or BiTE** Peter Voorhees, MD Professor of Medicine; Wake Forest University School of Medicine
3:20 PM – 4:05 PM	**Product Showcase - Kite Pharmaceuticals - Yescarta (axicabtagene ciloleucal) for the second-line treatment of large B-Cell lymphoma** Marco Davila, MD, PhD Head of CAR-T; Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center
4:05 PM – 4:15 PM	**Lymphoma and Myeloma Immune Effector Therapy Q/A**
4:15 PM – 5:00 PM	**Product Showcase - Pfizer - Advancing Care in RRMM: Clinical Evidence for a BCMA-Directed Bispecific Antibody Treatment Option** Saulius Girnius, MD Medical Director of Cellular Therapy; Trihealth Cancer Institute
5:00 PM – 5:20 PM	**Advancing Clinical Outcomes in Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia with Immune Effector Therapy** Evan Chen, MD Instructor in Medicine; Harvard Medical School
5:20 PM – 5:50 PM	**Product Showcase - AbbVie - Epkinly: Unlocking the Potential for a Bispecific Antibody in 3L+DLBCL and 2L+FL** Alan Skarbnik, MD Director of the Lymphoma and Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia Program and Director of Experimental Therapeutics, Malignant Hematology; Novant Health Cancer Institute
5:50 PM – 6:00 PM	**Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia Immune Effector Therapy Q/A**
6:00 PM – 6:20 PM	**The Nuts and Bolts of Doing it: Setting Up Immune Effector Therapy in Community Oncology Practice** Tara Graff, DO, MS Clinical Director of the Clinical Trials Program; Mission Cancer + Blood
6:20 PM – 6:35 PM	**Strategy for All Outpatient Management of Immune Effector Therapy in Community Oncology** Ralph Boccia, MD, FACP & Cassandra Perkey, PharmD, BCOP Medical Director, Regional Clinical Pharmacist; The Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders, American Oncology Network
6:35 PM – 6:45 PM	**Closing Remarks/Conclusion** Ruemu E. Birhiray, MD Clinical Professor of Medicine; Marian University - Wood College of Osteopathic Medicine
6:45 PM – 7:15 PM	**Reception**

About CONCERT and Supporters

CONCERT (**C**ommunity **ON**cology **CE**llula**R** **T**herapy Network) A free, half day of presentations for community oncologists, preceding our annual "Indy Hematology Review". Innovative immune effector therapies, including CAR T-cell and bi-specific antibody treatments, have transformed cancer care but remain largely inaccessible to community oncology practices. Our Network is dedicated to bridging this gap by establishing the necessary infrastructure, protocols, and training to safely and effectively administer these lifesaving therapies in community settings. By promoting equitable access, fostering clinical trial participation, and supporting diverse patient populations, we aim to reduce disparities and expand the reach of modern cellular therapies.

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IHE Rising Stars Friday, March 6th, 2026

4:00 PM - 4:20 PM	**Myelodysplastic & Myeloproliferative Neoplasms** Rami Komrokji, MD Vice chair of the Malignant Hematology Department; Moffitt Cancer Center
4:20 PM - 4:40 PM	**Indolent Lymphoma** Gilles Salles, MD, PhD Chief of Lymphoma Service and Steven A. Greenberg Chair; Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
4:40 PM - 5:00 PM	**Aggressive Lymphoma** Sonali Smith, MD, FASCO Elwood V. Jensen Professorship of Medicine; UChicago Medicine
5:00 PM - 5:20 PM	**Multiple Myeloma** Kenneth Anderson, MD Kraft Family Professor of Medicine; Harvard Medical School
5:20 PM - 5:40 PM	**Acute Myeloid Leukemia** Naseema Gangat, MBBS Professor of Medicine; Mayo Clinic
5:40 PM - 6:00 PM	**Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia** Elias Jabbour, MD Professor of Medicine; MD Anderson Cancer Center
6:00 PM - 6:20 PM	**CNS Manifestations of Lymphomas** Tracy Batchelor, MD, MPH Martin A. Samuels Professor of Neurology; Harvard Medical School
6:20 PM - 6:40 PM	**Q/A and PANEL DISCUSSION**
6:40 PM - 7:00 PM	**Meet the Professors**
7:00 PM - 8:00 PM	**IHE Rising Stars Dinner**

About Rising Stars and Supporters

IHE
Rising Stars

IHE Rising Stars

The motto of Indy Hematology Education is "achieving tomorrow's outcomes through education today", this is an important model and initial statement for our organization, and we believe that in the past 22 years we have done so for providers in Central Indiana, the Midwest, and the entire nation. However, we do believe that there remains a significant gap in our offering, particularly for persons and physicians who are currently undergoing training in medical oncology and hematology. We do believe that a focused conference to further promote education in this space of medical students, residents, fellows, and early career physicians is warranted and important as part of our mission.

The purpose of this is to invite trainees in medical oncology and hematology from across the nation to attend our conference and to have access to our esteemed international faculty. The goal of our conference is to promote education, interaction, networking, and an opportunity to look toward the future including potential employment for our trainees.

Indy Hematology Review 2025 Registration
featuring Maya Birhiray (yellow jacket)

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IHE Review Agenda Saturday, March 7th, 2026

6:00 AM - 10:00 AM	**Registration**
6:45 AM - 7:25 AM	**Breakfast Product Theater**
SESSION 1	**(Session Chair: Ruemu Birhiray, MD)**
7:30 AM - 8:00 AM	**State of the Art 2026: Emerging Therapies in Hematologic Malignancies** Ruemu E. Birhiray, MD Professor of Medicine; Marian University - Wood College of Osteopathic Medicine
8:00 AM - 8:20 AM	**Updating our Armamentarium: Emerging Treatment Options for Newly Diagnosed Patients with AML and Myelodysplastic Syndromes** Rami Komrokji, MD Vice chair of the Malignant Hematology Department; Moffitt Cancer Center
8:20 AM - 8:40 AM	**Approaches to the Application of Therapeutic Advances to the Relapsed Patient with AML and Myelodysplastic Syndromes** Guillermo Garcia-Manero, MD Chair Ad Interim of the Department of Leukemia in the Division of Cancer Medicine; The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas
8:40 AM - 9:00 AM	**CML in 2026: Advancements and Best Practices in Management** Richard Larson, MD Director of Hematologic Malignancies Clinical Research Program; University of Chicago Cancer Center
9:00 AM - 9:20AM	**VEXING HEMATOLOGIC DISORDERS: VEXAS and Somatic Mutation 'Benign' Diseases** Neal Young, MD Bethesda, Maryland
9:20 AM - 9:30 AM	**Myeloid Neoplasms - Panel Discussion**
9:30 AM - 9:45 AM	**Coffee Break - Exhibit Hall**
9:45 AM - 10:05 AM	**Advancing Options and Treatment Paradigms for Aplastic Anemia and Complementopathies** Robert Brodsky, MD Johns Hopkins Family Professor of Medicine and Oncology; Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
10:05 AM - 10:25 AM	**Modern Approaches to Classical Hematology: Navigating Bleeding and Clotting Disorders** Craig Kessler, MD, MACP Medical Director; Georgetown University Medical Center Hemophilia Treatment Center
10:25 AM - 10:45 AM	**Hematology - Panel Discussion**
10:45 AM - 11:05 AM	**How We Do It: A Case Presentation on the Management of Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia and Follicular Lymphoma** Elias Jabbour, MD[1] & Lorenzo Falchi, MD[2] [1]Professor of Medicine & [2]Assistant Attending Physician [1]MD Anderson Cancer Center & [2]Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
11:05 AM - 11:15 AM	**Coffee Break - Exhibit Hall**
11:15 AM - 11:25 AM	**Emerging Therapeutic Approaches to the Management of Newly Diagnosed Multiple Myeloma** Kenneth Anderson, MD Kraft Family Professor of Medicine; Harvard Medical School
11:25 AM - 11:45 AM	**Management of Relapsed Multiple Myeloma Patients: When and How to Apply Novel Therapeutic Tools** Saad Usmani, MD, MBA, FACP, FRCP Chief of Myeloma Service; Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
11:45 AM - 12:05 PM	**Advancing Care: Treating Waldenstrom's Macroglobulinemia in Today's Patients** Steven P. Treon, MD, MA, PhD, FRCP, FACP Director; Bing Center for Waldenström's Macroglobulinemia Research

IHE Review Agenda Saturday, March 7th, 2026

12:05 PM - 12:25 PM	**Harnessing Immune Effector Therapies in Multiple Myeloma** Joselle Cook, MD Assistant Professor of Medicine; Mayo Clinic
12:25 PM - 12:45 PM	**Why You Should Not Treat Smoldering Multiple Myeloma Outside a Clinical Trial** Morie Gertz, MD, MACP Chair Emeritus Department of Medicine; Mayo Clinic
12:45 PM - 12:55 PM	**Plasma Cell and Lymphoplasmacytic Neoplasms - Panel Discussion**
12:55 PM - 1:05 PM	**Coffee Break - Exhibit Hall**
1:05 PM - 1:50 PM	**Lunch and Product Theaters**
1:50 PM - 2:00 PM	**Coffee Break - Exhibit Hall**
SESSION 2	**(Session Chair: Michael Wiemann, MD, FACP)**
2:00 PM - 2:40 PM	**Beyond the Great Pond: A Global Approach to Managing the Controversies in the Treatment of Mantle Cell Lymphomas** Martin Dreyling, MD Professor of Medicine; Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich
2:40 PM - 3:00 PM	**Steven Coutré Memorial Lecture in Hematology Innovation - Treatment Options for Primary CNS Lymphoma** Tracy Batchelor, MD, MPH Martin A. Samuels Professor of Neurology; Harvard Medical School
3:00 PM- 3:05 PM	**Distinguished Lecturer Series - Panel Discussion**
3:05 PM - 3:25 PM	**Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia: Navigating Current and Emerging Treatment Strategies** Richard Stone, MD Lunder Family Chair in Leukemia and Chief of Staff; Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
3:25 PM- 3:45 PM	**Current and Emerging Treatment Options of Blastic Plasmacytoid Dendritic Cell Neoplasm and Myeloid/Lymphoid Neoplasms with Eosinophilia and Tyrosine Kinase (TK) gene fusions** Naveen Pemmaraju, MD Associate Professor in the Department of Leukemia; MD Anderson Cancer Center
3:45 PM- 4:10 PM	**Applying Emerging Data in My Current Strategies for Managing Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia** Jennifer Woyach, MD Director of the Division of Hematology; The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center
4:10 PM- 4:15 PM	**Lymphoid Neoplasms - Panel Discussion**
4:15 PM - 4:25 PM	**Coffee Break - Exhibit Hall**
4:25 PM - 4:45 PM	**Emerging Strategies in the Treatment of Indolent Lymphoma** Gilles Salles, MD, PhD Chief of Lymphoma Service and Steven A. Greenberg Chair; Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
4:45 PM - 5:05 PM	**“Primum non nocere” Applying Emerging Strategies for the Treatment of Hodgkin Lymphoma** Stephen M. Ansell, MD, PhD Chair of the Division of Hematology; Mayo Clinic
5:05 PM - 5:35 PM	**Cutting-Edge Advances in Treating Aggressive B and T Cell Lymphomas** Sonali Smith, MD, FASCO Elwood V. Jensen Professorship of Medicine; UChicago Medicine

IHE Review Agenda Saturday, March 7th, 2026

5:35 PM -5:55 PM	**T-cell Redirected Antibody Therapy for Lymphoid Malignancies** Tycel Phillips, MD Associate Professor of Medicine; City of Hope
5:55 PM - 6:15 PM	**Revolutionizing Lymphoid Malignancies with Cellular Therapy** Matthew Lunning, DO, FACP Interim Chief, UNMC Division of Hematology; University of Nebraska Medical Center
6:15 PM - 6:35 PM	**Choosing Wisely: Prognostication and Optimal Therapies for Myeloproliferative Neoplasms** Raajit Rampal, MD, PhD Director of the Myeloproliferative Neoplasms Program; Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
6:35 PM - 6:55 PM	**Hematopoietic Transplantation and Cellular Therapies: When to Refer** Richard Childs, MD Bethesda, Maryland
6:55 PM - 7:10 PM	**Lymphoma, Myeloid Proliferative Neoplasms, and Cellular Therapies - Panel Discussion**
7:10 PM - 7:30 PM	**Hors D'oeuvres**
7:30 PM - 8:30 PM	**Hematologic Malignancies Townhall** Ruemu E. Birhiray, MD – Chair and Moderator Michael Wiemann, MD, FACP – Co-Chair Morie Gertz, MD, MACP – Plasma Cell Disorders and Amyloidosis Jennifer Woyach, MD – Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia Rami Komrokji, MD – Acute Leukemias and Myelodysplastic Syndromes Martin Dreyling, MD – Lymphomas Saad Usmani, MD, MBA – Multiple Myeloma Joselle Cook, MD – Multiple Myeloma Raajit Rampal, MD, PhD – Myeloproliferative Neoplasms

Nursing and Allied Providers Symposium Agenda

Saturday, March 7th, 2026

6:00 AM - 10:00 AM	**Registration**
6:45 AM - 7:25 AM	**Breakfast Product Theater**
7:30 AM - 8:00 AM (Upstairs)	**State of the Art 2026: Emerging Therapies in Hematologic Malignancies** Ruemu E. Birhiray, MD Professor of Medicine; Marian University - Wood College of Osteopathic Medicine
8:10 AM - 9:00 AM	**"Foundations First: Practical Supportive Care Strategies in Modern Oncology" A Pharmacy & Nursing Partnership** David Reeves, PharmD, BCOP[1] & Kristi K Orbaugh, RN, MSN, RNP, AOCNP[2] [1]Professor of Pharmacy Practice & [2]Adult Nurse Practitioner [1]Butler University: College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences & [2]Community Hospital Oncology Physicians
9:00 AM - 9:30 AM	**Navigating Safety and Neutropenia in Oncology Care: Best Practices for Risk Mitigation** Mary Allen, BSN, MSN Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist; Indiana University Bloomington Hospital
9:30 AM - 9:45 AM	**Coffee Break - Exhibit Hall**
9:45 AM - 10:15 AM	**Tracking the Unseen: The Role of MRD in Guiding Myeloma Therapy** Ellen Dillard, MSN, APRN, FNP-C Nurse Practitioner; Karmanos Cancer Institute
10:15 AM - 10:45 AM	**Operationalizing BiTE therapy** Cassandra Perkey, PharmD, BCOP Regional Clinical Pharmacist; American Oncology Network
10:45 AM - 11:15 AM	**Caring for People with Sickle Cell Disease** Madison Moser, BSN, RN Clinic/Triage Nurse; Indiana Hemophilia & Thrombosis Center, Inc.
11:15 AM - 11:30 AM	**Coffee Break - Exhibit Hall**
11:30 AM - 11:55 AM	**Survivorship in Hematological Malignancies** Sandra Garofalo, MS, APRN, AOCNP Nurse Practitioner; Hematology Oncology of Indiana, a Division of American Oncology Network
11:55 AM - 12:25 PM	**Community-Based Management of High-Risk Acute APML: Addressing Differentiation, QTc Prolongation and Coagulopathy** Muna Chemali, PharmD, BCOP Clinical Pharmacy Specialist, Stem Cell Transplant and Cellular Therapy; Community Health Network MD Anderson Cancer Center
12:25 PM - 12:55 PM	**Taking Leukemia Treatment Home: Navigating Oral Agents in AML and ALL** Esta Works, MSN, BSN Nurse Practitioner; Community Hospital Oncology Physicians
12:55 PM - 1:05 PM	**Questions and Answers**
1:05 PM - 1:50 PM	**Luncheon Product Theater**
1:50 PM - 2:00 PM	**Coffee Break - Exhibit Hall**
2:00 PM - 2:40 PM (Upstairs)	**T. Howard Lee Keynote Lecture: Beyond the Great Pond: A Global Approach to Managing the Controversies in the Treatment of Mantle Cell Lymphomas** Martin Dreyling, MD Professor of Medicine; Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich
2:40 PM - 3:00 PM	**Coffee Break - Exhibit Hall**
3:00 PM - 3:30 PM	**The Evolving Landscape of Hypercoagulability: What Oncology Teams Need to Know in 2026** Leigh Flegge-Schlie, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC Nurse Practitioner; Hematology Oncology of Indiana

Nursing and Allied Providers Symposium Agenda

Saturday, March 7th, 2026

3:30 PM - 4:00 PM	**When It Is More Than Just a Fever: Bedside Evaluation and Management of Toxicities of T-cell Redirection Therapy** Matthew Lunning, DO, FACP Interim Chief, UNMC Division of Hematology; University of Nebraska Medical Center
4:00 PM - 4:30 PM	**Fundamentals of Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation** Sarah Knight, MPAS, PA-C Stem Cell Transplant & Cellular Therapy Physician Assistant; Community Health Network
4:30 PM - 4:45 PM	**Coffee Break - Exhibit Hall**
4:45 PM - 5:15 PM	**Multiple Myeloma and Plasma Cell Neoplasms: A Nursing Perspective of the Diagnosis and Treatment Paradigms in 2026** Joselle Cook, MBBS Assistant Professor of Medicine; Mayo Clinic
5:15 PM – 5:45 PM	**Art Therapy: Healing Your Mental Health** Meaghan Wiggins, LMHC, OPN-CG Art Therapist; IU Health University and Simon Cancer Center

An Interview with Joselle Cook, MD

Written by Nicola Donelan

In the world of hematology, progress is often measured in decades. Yet, for Dr. Joselle Cook, an assistant professor of medicine and myeloma specialist at the Mayo Clinic, the pace of change is personal. Her work focuses on translating high sensitivity diagnostics to the communities that need them most. In this interview we discussed her career evolution, the unique challenges facing women in oncology, and her "MAGIC" study, focused on community-based early detection.

A Career Inspired by a Community in Need of Better Care

Dr. Cook began her residency with the intention of becoming a rheumatologist. However, during her residency at SUNY Downstate in Brooklyn, she cared for a high volume of patients with advanced multiple myeloma, many from underserved, economically disadvantaged communities. That exposure shifted her clinical focus and career trajectory. *"It was the burden of disease and seeing late-stage myeloma that was really striking for me and those late presentations and the complications stayed with me,"* she explained.

This experience led her to a fellowship at the Mayo Clinic, where she eventually specialized in plasma cell disorders.

There is No Defined Path to Leadership

As a wife, a mother to a teenager, and a professional in a high-stakes field, Dr. Cook is vocal about the realities women face in medicine. She rejects the idea that women must follow the same career path as their male colleagues. "I've now stopped comparing myself to male colleagues because that comparison isn't meaningful" she says. From pregnancy to perimenopause, she highlights the importance of acknowledging physiological changes and how these impact energy and cognitive function.

"Our experience is different, and that difference is not a weakness. Career and leadership rarely follow a straight line."

The MAGIC Study: Early Detection in at Risk Populations

One of Dr. Cook's major ongoing research efforts is the MAGIC study (MGUS Myeloma Awareness and Genetic Insights Campaign). The MAGIC study is an education-based screening initiative aimed at characterizing monoclonal gammopathies among individuals of African ancestry, with a focus on improving health literacy, promoting early detection, and monitoring for participants. While medical science has long known that people of African ancestry are significantly more likely to develop myeloma, the "why" remains under-researched.

There are striking statistics on racial disparities in myeloma including:

Risk: Black Americans are 2 to 3 times more likely to be diagnosed with multiple myeloma than White Americans.

Age of Onset: On average, Black patients are diagnosed 4 to 5 years earlier than White patients.

Precursor Conditions: The prevalence of MGUS (Monoclonal Gammopathy of Undetermined Significance), a precursor to myeloma is significantly higher in Black populations, yet they remain underrepresented in the clinical trials that define treatment standards.

In her efforts to bridge this knowledge gap, Dr Cook credits her mentors Vincent Rajkumar and Shaji Kumar for being instrumental in guiding the development of the MAGIC

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study into the first-ever community-based ancestry-focused screening study for monoclonal gammopathies since its creation in 2022.

Through culturally responsive community based screening and education, she aims to investigate ancestry associated risk and improve health literacy, with the goal of earlier detection for at-risk populations and prevention of irreversible end-organ damage such as renal failure or bone fractures.

A New Era of Treatment

When asked what keeps her coming back on difficult days, Dr. Cook highlights the legacy of her mentors as well as the tangible progress being made at the Mayo Clinic where she is based. She is particularly encouraged by the recent leaps in immunotherapy.

"With current CAR-T therapies, about 5% to 8% of patients may contend with delayed neurologic toxicity or Parkinsonism" she notes. *"New constructs that mitigate these serious complications are incredibly exciting."* Achieving a functional cure is no longer just aspirational; it potentially is within reach," says Cook.

To illustrate this, she points to a few groundbreaking treatments such as the combination of teclistamab and subcutaneous daratumumab (Tec-Dara) recently granted an FDA national priority voucher for the treatment of relapsed/refractory multiple myeloma; the first FDA-approved treatment for high-risk smoldering myeloma; and new CAR-T constructs like Anito-cel.

Dr. Cook used the example of research carried out by her colleague Dr. Bob Kyle on smoldering myeloma, which was first described in 1980, and just over four decades later, there is an FDA-approved therapy for the precursor condition.

"Seeing that level of progress in a single career span reinforces the idea that focused research can move the field forward," she says. *"If that change was possible in such a short time, the work I'm doing now has real potential to shape what comes next."*

Whether in the high-tech labs of the Mayo Clinic or through community-anchored screening, Dr. Cook remains driven by a singular mission: to use ancestry-informed risk to individualize screening and follow up for monoclonal gammopathies, while improving community health literacy and increasing trust in research.

Joselle
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Dr Joselle Cook at the Indy Hematology Review 2025

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Interview with Omar Abdihamid Ahmed, MD: 2026 IHE International Scholarship Recipient

Written by Abbey Suess

Dr. Omar Abdihamid Ahmed, serves as the lead clinical oncologist at the Garissa Regional Cancer Center in Northeastern Kenya. Established as the first dedicated cancer center in the region in over 60 years, Garissa represents a transformative development in cancer care delivery for underserved communities. Since joining the center in 2022, Dr. Ahmed has been a leader of this effort, providing care to at least 60 patients weekly across 11 counties.

Building Oncology Infrastructure in a Resource-Limited Setting

At Garissa, oncology practice is structured out of necessity rather than subspecialization. Dr. Ahmed explains, "We practice general clinical oncology," as opposed to the Western methods of subspecialization. In a region where workforce limitations and infrastructure constraints shape care access, versatility is essential to successful practice.

Garissa is one of the three government funded comprehensive cancer centers in Kenya located outside the capital city of Nairobi. Its establishment has addressed longstanding challenges in providing access to care for patients in rural northeastern Kenya. Before Garissa opened, patients had to travel to Nairobi for cancer care, incurring travel costs, lodging expenses, time away from work, and separation from family support systems and familiar culture and environment.

By providing care locally, the center has significantly reduced time toxicity, financial strain, and social and emotional disruption for patients. Dr. Amhed states,"Patients getting treated in their own backyard, in their own community, and by community oncologists has been so impactful."

Serving Nomadic and Multilingual Communities

Northeastern Kenya is home to diverse and nomadic populations, including large Somali communities. Delivering oncology care in this context can present unique challenges. However, Dr. Ahmed describes his work as both demanding and deeply rewarding.

Language concordance has proven to be a critical component of patient trust and engagement. Multiple languages are spoken throughout the region, including Swahili, Somali, and Kamba. Dr. Ahmed emphasizes that significant barriers arise when translation is required between physicians and patients. The Garissa team's multilingual capacity allows them to communicate directly with patients, creating trust and minimizing misunderstandings and relational barriers.

Beyond language, the center prioritizes cultural sensitivity and an anti-paternalistic approach to care. Patient support groups and community based engagement efforts ensure dignity, representation, and continuity of care. Despite the challenges inherent in serving rural and nomadic populations, Garissa reports a high rate of follow-up care, an achievement Dr. Ahmed attributes this to the team's commitment and close community ties built on relational trust.

Advancing Research in Low and Middle Income Countries

Dr. Ahmed is deeply committed to research despite financial and time constraints. In his unit, he serves as the primary individual conducting research activities. He credits his mentor, Professor Nazik Ahmmad of St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, Canada, as a critical influence in sustaining his research ambitions. Professor Ahmmad has long advocated for research

growth and oncology development across Africa, encouraging Dr. Ahmed to persist even when resources are scarce.
Dr. Ahmed approaches these challenges with resolve: "I can choose to complain, or to do the work." He describes the current efforts at Garissa as foundational, saying, "we are doing the leg work." Though funding remains limited, he expresses hope that published data from Garissa will lead to further investment and collaboration.

Key to the center's success has been the availability of patient data, the relevance of real-world cancer challenges worthy of publication, and what Dr. Ahmed describes as a "small but able team" that is highly motivated to improve patient care and outcomes.

Representation in global oncology research remains the central concern in Dr. Ahmed's practice. Dr. Ahmed notes that low and middle income countries, particularly in Africa, have historically been underrepresented in clinical trials and scholarly publications. However, he observes encouraging progress: an increasing number of young oncology researchers across Africa are pursuing publications and clinical trials relevant to their communities.

Goals for the Future

Dr. Ahmed's goals for Garissa's future and Northeastern Kenya are focused on community needs. He hopes to establish a standalone research unit at Garissa capable of conducting locally relevant clinical trials. He plans to work with this team conducting evidence-based, locally relevant research leading to an influx in publications, investigating the underlying causes of the region's disproportionately high rates of head and neck cancers. Strengthening research infrastructure would allow the center to generate evidence tailored to the populations it serves.

Dr. Ahmed envisions a future in which Garissa not only delivers high-quality clinical care but also contributes meaningfully to the global oncology evidence base. By preparing now through data collection, publication, and infrastructure development, he aims to create a solid foundation for the next generation of oncologists and researchers in Northeastern Kenya.

Commitment Beyond Constraint

In settings of limited resources, progress often depends on perseverance. Dr. Ahmed's leadership at the Garissa Regional Cancer Center exemplifies this principle. Through clinical excellence, cultural sensitivity, and unwavering dedication to research, he and his team are expanding access to care and strengthening the voice of marginalized communities in global oncology.

As the 2026 IHE International Scholarship Recipient, Dr. Ahmed represents the growing movement of physician leaders in rural areas throughout the globe who are transforming cancer care through commitment to culturally sensitive and community based care. His work stands as both a model and a reminder: meaningful change in cancer care begins with those willing to do the work: patient by patient, study by study, and community by community.

Indy Hematology Review 2025 Panel Discussion Featuring Drs. Christopher Flowers, Jennifer Woyach, Richard Stone, Joselle Cook, Saad Usmani, and Ruemu Birhiray (left to right)

2026 Faculty

Jerome M. Adams, MD, MPH, FASA

Former Surgeon General; United States of America

Executive Director; Purdue University Center for Community Health Enhancement and Learning (HEAL)
Distinguished Professor of Practice; Purdue University Departments of Pharmacy Practice and Public Health

Dr. Jerome Adams was appointed as a Presidential Fellow and the Executive Director of the Center for Community Health Enhancement and Learning (HEAL) on October 1, 2021. He is also a Distinguished Professor of Practice in the departments of Pharmacy Practice and Public Health at Purdue University–West Lafayette. As the 20th U.S. Surgeon General and a prior member of the President's Coronavirus task force, Dr. Adams has been at the forefront of America's most pressing health challenges. A regular communicator via tv, radio, and in print, Dr. Adams is an expert not just in the science, but also in communicating the science to the lay public, and making it relevant to various audiences.

Dr. Adams is a licensed anesthesiologist with a master's degree in public health, and ran the Indiana State Department of Health prior to becoming Surgeon General. In the State Health Commissioner role he managed a $350 million dollar budget and over 1000 employees, and led Indiana's response to Ebola, Zika, and HIV crises. Notably, Dr. Adams helped convince the Governor and State Legislature to legalize syringe service programs in the state, and to prioritize $13 million in funding to combat infant mortality. As Surgeon General, Dr. Adams was the operational head of the 6000 person Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, and oversaw responses to 3 back to back category 5 hurricanes, and to a once in a century pandemic. In addition to his recent COVID 19 work, Dr. Adams has partnered with and assisted organizations as they navigate the opioid epidemic, maternal health, rising rates of chronic disease, the impacts of rising suicide rates in our Nation, and how businesses can become better stewards and stakeholders in promoting community health.

Omar Abdihamid Ahmed, MD

Clinical Oncologist; Garissa Regional Cancer Center, Kenya
Vice President, African Organization for Research & Training in Cancer (AORTIC)

Dr. Omar Abdihamid Ahmed is a dedicated and highly qualified medical professional specializing in clinical oncology. Based in Nairobi, Kenya, Dr. Omar Abdihamid Ahmed brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the diagnosis and management of cancer. His commitment to patient well-being is evident in his comprehensive approach to clinical oncology. He obtained his M.Med (Clin. Oncol) (Central South) 2021, MBBS (Central South) 2014, demonstrating a strong foundation in medicine and a focused specialization in oncology. Patients seeking expert clinical oncology in Nairobi can find compassionate and skilled care with Dr. Omar Abdihamid Ahmed. His practice is conveniently located at P.O. Box 0707811973 00100 Nairobi, making it accessible for individuals seeking specialized medical attention. Dr. Omar Abdihamid Ahmed is committed to providing the highest standard of clinical oncology to his patients.

Mary Allen, MSN, ACNS-BC, AOCNS, PMGT-BC

Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist; IU Health Bloomington RAHC
Clinical Faculty; Indiana University School of Nursing

Mary L. Allen, MSN, ACNS-BC, AOCNS, PMGT-BC, is a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Oncology and Pain Management at IU Health Bloomington Hospital, where she has practiced since 2005. She also serves as an Associate Clinical Instructor at the Indiana University School of Nursing, contributing to nursing education for more than two decades. Ms. Allen holds a Master of Science in Nursing as an Adult Health Clinical Nurse Specialist and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Indiana University. Her clinical expertise includes oncology care, pain management, chemotherapy and immunotherapy, and advanced practice nursing roles. She has presented nationally at Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) Congress and research conferences on topics including oncology program development, radiation safety, quality of life, and emerging patient education trends. Ms. Allen is actively involved in professional service, including leadership roles within oncology nursing organizations, national certification item writing, and exam development for the National Council of State Boards of Nursing.

Kenneth Anderson , MD

Kraft Family Professor of Medicine; Harvard Medical School
Director of the Jerome Lipper Multiple Myeloma Center; Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Dr. Ken Anderson is the Kraft Family Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, as well as Director of the Jerome Lip-

per Multiple Myeloma Center at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. He trained in internal medicine at Johns Hopkins Hospital, and then completed hematology, medical oncology, and tumor immunology training at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. He is a Doris Duke Distinguished Clinical Research Scientist and American Cancer Society Clinical Research Professor.
Over the last four decades, he has developed laboratory and animal models of multiple myeloma in its microenvironment which have allowed for both identification of novel targets and validation of novel targeted and immune therapies. He has then led efforts to rapidly translate these studies to clinical trials culminating in FDA approval of multiple novel targeted therapies, which have transformed the treatment paradigm and markedly improved patient outcome.

He has also trained generations of researchers and caregivers who are now leading myeloma centers internationally. He has received the American Society of Hematology William Dameshek Prize, the American Association for Cancer Research Joseph H. Burchenal Award, the American Society of Clinical Oncology David A. Karnofsky Award, and the Harvard Medical School Warren Alpert Prize. He is also the recipient of the Robert A. Kyle Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Myeloma Foundation and the Waldenstrom Award at the International Myeloma Workshop. He is a Fellow of the American Association for Cancer Research Academy and the American Society of Clinical Oncology, a member of the National Academy of Medicine as well as Royal College of Physicians and Pathologists, and past President of the International Myeloma Society and American Society of Hematology.

Stephen M. Ansell, MD, PhD

Chair of the Division of Hematology; Mayo Clinic
Dorotha W. and Grant L. Sundquist Professor in Hematologic Malignancies Research; Mayo Clinic
Consultant in the Division of Hematology, Department of Internal Medicine; Mayo Clinic
Enterprise Deputy Director; Mayo Clinic Cancer Center
Professor of Medicine; Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science

Stephen M. Ansell, MD, PhD, is a consultant in the Division of Hematology, Department of Internal Medicine at Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. Dr. Ansell currently serves as chair of the Division of Hematology and the Enterprise Deputy Director of the Mayo Clinic Cancer Center. He joined the staff of Mayo Clinic in 1999 and holds the academic rank of Professor of Medicine, Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science.

Dr. Ansell earned his MB, ChB, and PhD degrees at University of Pretoria in Pretoria, South Africa, where he also completed an internship in internal medicine and surgery, a residency in internal medicine, and a fellowship in medical oncology. Dr. Ansell continued his education at University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg where he was a registrar in internal medicine. He then came to the United States and completed a residency in internal medicine and then a fellowship in hematology/oncology at Mayo Clinic. Dr. Ansell's research focuses on investigating the phenotype and activity of intratumoral T-cells and developing strategies to modulate the immune function in lymphomas.

Belinda Avalos, MD

Immediate Past ASH President; American Society of Hematology
Professor of Medicine; Atrium Health Cancer Institute
Senior Advisor to the President; Atrium Health Cancer Institute

Belinda R. Avalos, MD, is a Professor of Medicine and a Senior Advisor to the President of Atrium Health Levine Cancer. Dr. Avalos earned her medical degree and completed her residency at Ohio State University. She performed fellowship training in hematology and oncology at the University of Washington and the University of California, Los Angeles.

Dr. Avalos was the 2025 President of the American Society of Hematology. As a member of ASH since 1993, Dr. Avalos has previously served as a member of the Health Equity Task Force, chair of the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and editor-in-chief of ASH News Daily. She most recently served as an ASH Councilor.

As a distinguished physician-scientist, Dr. Avalos has made significant research contributions in the areas of leukemogenesis, congenital neutropenia, transplantation, and cellular therapy. She has also championed recruitment and retention of students and trainees who come from communities traditionally underrepresented in hematology.

Tracy Batchelor, MD, MPH

Martin A. Samuels Professor of Neurology; Harvard Medical School
Chair, Department of Neurology; Mass General Brigham

Tracy Batchelor, M.D., M.P.H., is the Chair of the Department of Neurology at Mass General Brigham and the Martin A. Samuels Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School and Co Leader of the Neuro-Oncology Program at the Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center (DF/HCC). From 2018 to 2025, he served as the Neurologist-In-Chief and Chair of the Department of Neurology, Brigham and Women's Hospital.

He was previously the Executive Director of the Stephen E. and Catherine Pappas Center for Neuro-Oncology, Associate Clinical Director of the Cancer Center, and Chief of the Division of Neuro-Oncology in the Department of Neurology at Massachusetts General Hospital. He was the Count Giovanni Armenise Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School from 2012-2019. Dr. Batchelor's research focuses on experimental therapeutics for gliomas and primary central nervous system lymphoma, and he has over 300 peer-reviewed publications in these areas. He is the principal investigator on three active National Cancer Institute grants, including the DF/HCC P50/SPORE award, the DF/HCC U19 Glioblastoma Therapeutics Network award, and a T32 training grant in Cancer Neuroscience. He is the immediate past chair of the National Cancer Institute Brain Malignancies Steering Committee and the immediate Past President of the Society for Neuro Oncology. He has also served in multiple elected leadership positions within the American Academy of Neurology and the Society for Neuro-Oncology. Dr. Batchelor received his medical degree from Emory University School of Medicine and a master's in public health from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. He completed his medicine internship, neurology residency and neuro-oncology fellowship at Yale-New Haven Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital, and Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, respectively. He has received multiple accolades for his excellence and leadership in the field, including awards from the American Academy of Neurology and the Society for Neuro-Oncology. He was awarded the Raymond D. Adams Award for excellence in mentoring by the MGH in 2018.

Maya N. Birhiray, MS

Medical Student; Indiana University School of Medicine
Medical Science Liaison; Indy Hematology Education Inc.

Maya N. Birhiray holds a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Health Sciences from Purdue University—West Lafayette and a Master of Science in Anatomy, Cell Biology, and Physiology from the Indiana University School of Medicine. Maya continues to pursue her medical education as a first year medical student at Indiana University School of Medicine. Serving as a Medical Science Liaison for Indy Hematology Education Inc. (IHE), Maya collaborates with IHE faculty and external organizations to plan and execute impactful educational events.
In addition to her liaison responsibilities, Maya is the co-author and creator of IHE's DRIVE initiative, which aims to promote diversity, inclusion, and equity within cancer clinical research. Through this work, she is committed to fostering a more equitable healthcare environment and enhancing educational opportunities for all.

Ruemu E. Birhiray, MD

Professor of Medicine; Marian University - Wood College of Osteopathic Medicine
Partner; Hematology Oncology of Indiana, a Division of American Oncology Network
President and CEO; Indy Hematology Education Inc.
Medical Director of Diversity; American Oncology Research (AOR)

Ruemu E. Birhiray, MD is an attending physician in medical oncology, hematology, and hematopoietic stem cell transplantation at Hematology-Oncology of Indiana, and at St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana. After completing his internal medicine residency at Columbus Hospital in Chicago where he also served as Chief Medical Resident in 1994, he was a postgraduate fellow in bone marrow transplant at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and in medical oncology at the National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland where his research included gene therapy and adoptive cellular immunotherapy strategies in bone marrow transplantation. Dr. Birhiray's professional experience has also included serving as an attending physician, and Director of bone marrow transplantation and a member of Marshfield Clinic, Wisconsin and a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin from 1998 to 2001. Additionally Dr. Birhiray was appointed an Associate Professor of bone marrow transplantation at Rush University, Chicago, Illinois in 2001, prior to joining Hematology Oncology of Indiana. Subsequently, Dr. Birhiray, served as and director of Bone Marrow Transplantation and Institutional Principal Investigator for the National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project of the National Cancer Institute at St. Vincent's Hospital, Indianapolis. Currently, he is also, Clinical Professor, Marian University School of Osteopathic Medicine, Indianapolis, Indiana, and an Editorial Board Member of The Journal of Blood Transfusion and Hematopathology. Projects for which Dr. Birhiray is principal investigator include reduced intensity allogeneic transplantation in hematologic malignancies, and a trial of Interferon A, CHOP, and rituximab therapy in advanced-stage follicular lymphoma, and neoadjuvant chemotherapy for breast cancer. Additional collaborations have included major phase III clinical trials.

Additionally Dr. Birhiray founded the Clinical research program at Hematology Oncology of Indiana. His awards include, "Intern of the year" from Columbus Hospital, Hope award from the Indiana Wellness community and named "best physician" by the Indianapolis monthly magazine and "top doctor" by Castle Connelly. In 2002, Dr. Birhiray founded and has served as Chair of the annual "Indy Hematology Review", a nationally respected program providing education for hematologists and oncologists nationally and regionally, and he is also President and CEO of Indy Hematology Education, Inc. A member of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, the American Society of Hematology, and the American Medical Association, Dr Birhiray has published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology, Leukemia, Gene Therapy and Therapeutic Apheresis, Journal of Blood Transfusion and Hematopathology, Human Immunology, Familial Cancer, Annals of Pharmacotherapy, American Journal of Health System Pharmacists, Pharmacotherapy, in addition to multiple abstracts. Dr. Birhiray is married to Donna Marie (nee Baynard) since 1995, and they are blessed with 3 children, a daughter, Maya, born in 1999, and a son, Dirin, born in 2003, and an older daughter Meaghan who was born in 1990.

Ralph V. Boccia, MD, FACP

Medical Director; The Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders
Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine; Georgetown University
Chief Medical Officer; International Oncology Network (ION)
Chairman; ION's Medical Advisory Panel
Medical Director; American Oncology Research (AOR)

Ralph V. Boccia, MD, FACP Dr Boccia is Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, and Medical Director for the Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders in Bethesda, Maryland, He is also Chief Medical Officer for the International Oncology Network (ION), and chairman for ION's Medical Advisory Panel. Dr Boccia completed training in internal medicine at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)– affiliated hospitals. His hematology, oncology, and bone marrow transplant fellowships were completed at the combined UCLA-VA Program and The National Cancer Institute at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. He is a member of the American College of Physicians, American Society of Clinical Oncology, American Society of Hematology, and the American Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation. With his vast experience and research, Dr Boccia has published more than 180 articles in journals such as the Journal of Clinical Oncology, New England Journal of Medicine, Cancer, Blood, Annals of Internal Medicine, Lancet, and Oncology amongst others. He is listed in Who's Who in America, and has been voted into Washingtonian's Best Physicians in Washington and Consumers' Checkbook's Guide to Top Doctors in Washington, DC every year since 1992.

Robert A. Brodsky, MD

Johns Hopkins Family Professor of Medicine and Oncology; Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
Director, Division of Hematology; Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
Program Director, T32 Training Program, Division of Hematology; Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
Professor of Medicine; Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

Dr. Brodsky is the Johns Hopkins Family Professor of Medicine and Oncology, and a member of the Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center. He also serves as the Director of the Division of Hematology and the T32 Training Program.
Dr. Brodsky received his medical degree from Hahnemann University. He completed his residency in Internal Medicine at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine and his fellowship training in hematology at the National Institutes of Health and in oncology at Johns Hopkins University.
Dr. Brodsky's clinical and academic interests relate to bone marrow failure disorders, hemolytic anemias, and complement. He and his colleagues performed the first successful half matched bone marrow transplant worldwide for sickle cell disease in 2007.He is on the editorial board for Blood, is a Section Editor for UpToDate. He is on the Executive Committee of the American Society of Hematology (ASH) and served as 2023 President for ASH.

Todd Burus, PhD, MASc

Assistant Professor of Biomedical Informatics; University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center

Todd Burus, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Biomedical Informatics at the University of Kentucky and member of the University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center. His work focuses on utilizing technology and advanced statistical methods to improve cancer surveillance and the identification of cancer health disparities. Todd is the creator and lead developer of Cancer InFocus—a data gathering and visualization platform for simplifying the implementation of cancer surveillance dashboards that has been adopted by over 50 institutions. Todd is also one of the founders of the Catchment Area Research and Data Science (CARDS) interest group and a founding member of the Catchment Area Data Excellence (CADEx) meeting steering committee.

Muna Chemali , PharmD, BCOP

Clinical Pharmacy Specialist, Stem Cell Transplant and Cellular Therapy; Community Health Network MD Anderson Cancer Center

Dr. Muna Chemali is a clinical pharmacy specialist in stem cell transplant and cellular therapy at Community MD Anderson Cancer Center in Indianapolis, Indiana. She graduated from Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Science

University with a PharmD in 2018 and completed both PGY1 pharmacy practice and PGY-2 hematology/oncology residencies at Indiana University Health.

Evan C. Chen, MD

Instructor in Medicine; Harvard Medical School

Dr. Evan C. Chen is an Attending Physician in the Adult Leukemia Program at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, and an Instructor in Medicine at Harvard Medical School. He is a clinician and clinical investigator who cares for patients with myeloid malignancies and acute leukemias, including acute myeloid leukemia, acute lymphoblastic leukemia, myelodysplastic syndrome, and myeloproliferative neoplasms. His research interests are in the development of novel therapies for myeloid malignancies, with a focus on cellular therapy strategies and the study of leukemia epigenetics to identify new therapeutic vulnerabilities.

Richard Childs, MD

Bethesda, Maryland

Key Abstracts: Regression of Metastatic Renal-Cell Carcinoma after Nonmyeloablative Allogeneic Peripheral-Blood Stem-Cell Transplantation (Sep. 14, 2000); Compassionate Use of Remdesivir for Patients with Severe Covid-19 (April 10, 2020); High levels of GDF15 in thalassemia suppress expression of the iron regulatory protein hepcidin (August 26, 2007); Chromatin Signatures in Multipotent Human Hematopoietic Stem Cells Indicate the Fate of Bivalent Genes during Differentiation (January 9, 2009)

Joselle M. Cook , MD

Assistant Professor of Medicine; Mayo Clinic
Editor-in-Chief; 2025 ASH News Daily Editorial Board

Dr Joselle Cook is a hematologist and oncologist, specializing in Myeloma, Amyloid and Plasma cell disorders at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester Minnesota. She is an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Mayo Clinic Rochester in the Division of Hematology. Her research focuses on determining the prevalence and biologic drivers of precursor plasma cell disorders, particularly in understudied and high-risk populations. She initiated the MAGIC study which is the first ever screening study of monoclonal gammopathies in people across the African Diaspora. She also is a researcher in novel immunotherapeutics, specifically oncolytic virotherapy for hematologic malignancies.

Mitch D'Rozario, PhD, MPH

Population Health Dashboard Analytics Lead; Genentech

Mitch R. D'Rozario Ph.D., is a Sr. Medical Science Liaison at Genentech, Inc., with extensive experience supporting a wide range of treatments from Phase I-IV, including ocular surgical devices, biologics, oral inhibitors, bispecific antibodies, and more. As a trained developmental biologist and geneticist, Mitch brings a unique perspective to his role, advocating for customers and patients, collaborating with internal colleagues, and building strategic tools to make informed business decisions and deliver urgent medical solutions. Mitch studied myelination during his postdoctoral fellowship at WashU School of Medicine and secured the prestigious NIH F32 fellowship. Mitch earned his Ph.D. studying synapse biology and was selected as the graduate commencement speaker. Mitch enjoys keeping up with his two young boys in his free time while completing a part-time MPH at the University of Illinois-Chicago

Ellen Dillard, MSN, APRN, FNP-C

Nurse Practitioner; Karmanos Cancer Institute

Ellen Dillard, MSN, APRN, FNP-C is a Nurse practitioner, Hematology Oncology and Bone Marrow Transplant Program, Karmanos Cancer Institute, Detroit, Michigan. She brings over 12 years of experience at Karmanos. She earned both her Bachelor in Nursing and Master of Science in Nursing from Michigan State University. She specializes in hematopoietic stem cell transplant, CAR T-cell therapy and malignant hematology. Ellen is passionate about promoting health advocacy – particularly within African American communities - empowering patients through education and building strong therapeutic relationships while guiding patients through their treatment journey.

Martin Dreyling, MD

Professor of Medicine, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich
President; German Lymphoma Alliance

Prof. Martin Dreyling earned his MD in 1987 after studying medicine at Düsseldorf, Giessen, Tübingen, and Würzburg. He completed internships and residencies across Germany, received his doctorate in 1990, and conducted hematology/oncology research at the University of Chicago before habilitating in 2001 on the tumor suppressor region 9p21. Since 2007, he has served as Full Professor and Head of Medical Clinic III at LMU Munich, focusing on molecular mechanisms of lymphomagenesis, cell cycle dysregulation in mantle cell lymphoma, and innovative therapies for indolent lymphomas. A past-president of the German Lymphoma Alliance and EHA Executive Board member, Dr. Dreyling has authored over 300 peer-reviewed articles and received awards including the 2017 Hermansky Award and the 2021 John Ultmann Award.

Lorenzo Falchi, MD

Assistant Attending Physician; Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

Dr. Falchi graduated Cum Laude from the University of Perugia, Italy. He completed a postdoctoral fellowship at MD Anderson Cancer Center, residency at Yale-New Haven Hospital, and Hematology/Oncology fellowship at Columbia University Medical Center. He is currently an Assistant Attending in the Lymphoma and Cellular Therapy Services at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

Dr. Falchi's research focuses on the use of immunotherapy to treat B-cell NHL. He leads multiple such trials nationally and internationally. He authored or co-authored over 75 articles published in peer-reviewed journals, numerous abstracts, and several book chapters.

Dr. Falchi is Co-Editor-In-Chief of Oncoimmunology, Editorial Board Member for Blood Advances, and recurrent peer-reviewer for high-profile journals. He is recipient of several awards, including a Lymphoma Research Foundation Career Development Award. He is an active member of several scientific societies, including the American Society of Hematology.
Leigh Flegge-Schlie, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC
Nurse Practitioner; Hematology Oncology of Indiana
Leigh Flegge-Schlie, DNP, FNP-BC, RN is a dedicated oncology nurse practitioner with nearly a decade of experience guiding patients and families through the complexities of cancer care. Known for her compassionate, patient-centered approach, she has built her career around the belief that both patients and providers thrive when care is personalized, holistic, and rooted in human connection.

Flegge-Schlie earned her Doctor of Nursing Practice from Saint Mary's College of Notre Dame, where her scholarly work focused on oncology nurse retention—an issue she feels passionately about as both a clinician and an advocate for the nursing profession. Her work aims to not only improve outcomes for oncology patients but also to elevate the wellbeing and longevity of those who care for them.

Currently, she practices at Hematology Oncology of Indiana, where she is proud to contribute to a team that prioritizes excellence, innovation, and empathy in cancer care. Her previous roles have included clinical leadership and hands-on care at institutions such as the VA Hospital Fort Wayne, Ascension St. Vincent, and IU Health Joe & Shelly Schwarz Cancer Center. Flegge-Schlie is committed to advancing the future of oncology nursing through continued research in nurse retention and aspires to merge clinical practice with academic work to shape the next generation of nurse leaders.

Naseema Gangat, MBBS

Professor of Medicine; Mayo Clinic

Naseema Gangat, M.B.B.S., is a professor of medicine and a consultant in hematology at Mayo Clinic. She completed her residency and fellowship in internal medicine, hematology, and oncology at Mayo Clinic and is board certified in medical oncology, internal medicine, and hematology.

She has received several awards for her research and teaching excellence, and has been involved in various committees and editorial boards related to hematology and oncology. She has developed curricula and courses for internal medicine residency and hematology/oncology fellowship programs, and has mentored many students and trainees. Her clinical research is primarily in myeloid malignancies, especially myelodysplastic syndromes and myeloproliferative neoplasms, and has published over 100 peer-reviewed articles, abstracts, and book chapters.

Guillermo Garcia-Manero, MD

Chair Ad Interim of the Department of Leukemia in the Division of Cancer Medicine
The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas

Dr. Kenneth B. McCredie Chair in Clinical Leukemia Research; The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas
Chief of the Section of Myelodysplastic Syndromes (MDS); The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas
Dr. Guillermo Garcia-Manero is the Chair, ad interim, of the Department of Leukemia at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, where he also holds the Dr. Kenneth B. McCredie Chair in Clinical Leukemia Research. He serves as Chief of the Section of Myelodysplastic Syndromes (MDS) and previously led the MDS/AML Moon Shot Program and served as Program Director of the Leukemia Fellowship Program at MD Anderson. Dr. Garcia-Manero was President of the Society of Hematologic Oncology (SOHO) for the 2023–2024 term. Born in Spain, Dr. Garcia-Manero received his medical degree and training at the University of Zaragoza and the Royal Free Hospital in London, UK. From 1993 to 1996, he completed his internship and residency in Internal Medicine at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He then pursued a fellowship in Hematology and Medical Oncology at the Cardeza Foundation for Hematology Research, Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center, also at Thomas Jefferson University, where he served as Chief Fellow. In 1999, he joined the Department of Leukemia at MD Anderson Cancer Center as an Assistant Professor, where he has since spent the entirety of his academic career. Dr. Garcia-Manero's research focuses on elucidating the cellular and molecular

biology of myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS) and acute myeloid leukemia (AML), with the goal of improving therapeutic options for patients with these diseases.

His research has been supported by the NIH, Department of Defense, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, CPRIT, E.P. Evans Foundation, and the MDS/AML Moon Shot Program. He has co-authored over 1,000 manuscripts, with an H-index of 168 and an i10-index of 1,136, and his work has been cited more than 130,000 times. Currently, Dr. Garcia-Manero serves as Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator on more than 30 active clinical trials in AML and MDS. He leads the largest leukemia program in the world and directs what is likely the largest single-institution MDS unit globally, seeing over 400 new patients annually. He maintains one of the busiest clinical practices at MD Anderson, overseeing a department of more than 60 faculty members. Dr. Garcia-Manero has received numerous prestigious awards, including the Otis W. and Pearl L. Walters Faculty Achievement Award in Clinical Research, the Emil J. Freireich Award for Excellence in Translational Research, the Giant of Cancer Care in Leukemia Award, the AAMDSIF Leadership in Science Award, and the Ciril Rozman Lecture Award from the Spanish Society of Hematology (2024). He was recently inducted as a member of the Association of American Physicians and has been recognized among the Best Doctors in America every year since 2007. A dedicated mentor and educator, Dr. Garcia-Manero has trained over 100 fellows and postdoctoral researchers and is a frequent speaker at major national and international conferences.

Sandra Garofalo, MS, APRN, AOCNP

Nurse Practitioner; Hematology Oncology of Indiana, a Division of American Oncology Network

Sandra G. Garofalo has over 20 years of experience in the field of oncology. She completed her bachelor's of science in nursing as well as her masters of science at The Ohio State University. She started her nursing career in hematopoietic stem cell transplant at The Medical University of South Carolina. Since that time, she has had extensive experience in hematological, solid tumor malignancies, cellular therapy and benign hematology. She has worked at The Ohio State University, Hematology Oncology of Indiana and Indiana Blood and Marrow Transplant. She lives in Indianapolis and is a mother to 7 adult children which is the only calling she cherishes more than being a nurse practitioner.

Morie A. Gertz, MD, MACP

Chair Emeritus Department of Medicine; Mayo Clinic
Roland Seidler Jr. Professor of the Art of Medicine; Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota

Morie Gertz, MD, MACP is a Master of the American College of Physicians. His undergraduate degree was awarded with highest distinction from Northwestern University graduating Phi Beta Kappa.

Karla Goins, MBA

Founder & Principal Advocate; AdVICE Group LLC
Vice President, Product Design at Phluence

Karla Goins is the Founder and Principal Advocate of AdVICE Group, LLC, and serves as Vice President of Product Design at Phluence. A seasoned patient access and reimbursement strategist, she brings over 25 years of experience driving access, reimbursement, and patient support strategies across the pharmaceutical, biotech, and health insurance industries. Her deep understanding of the payer landscape was forged during many years at a national healthcare insurer, where she gained firsthand insight into coverage determinations, claims adjudication, and the barriers patients face when trying to access their medications. That foundation has shaped the last 15 years of her career, which she has devoted to patient access and reimbursement for specialty drug launches across oncology, hematology, rare disease, lupus, and respiratory therapeutic areas. Her career has been defined by a singular mission: ensuring that no patient is left behind. That mission is deeply personal. Karla grew up in a Midwestern auto worker and healthcare household— a middle-class family whose values were shaped long before she was born. Her mother didn't start kindergarten until the age of seven, after her grandparents moved their large family out of the coal mines of southeastern Kentucky to Louisville, where they hoped to build a better life. One of her mother's earliest photographs shows a young girl sitting on a covered porch with large holes between the floorboards and a dirt-smudged face—a quiet testament to where the family began. That legacy of hard work, resilience, and looking out for those who have the least is woven into Karla's DNA and fuels every aspect of her career. A recognized leader in shaping patient support programs and field reimbursement operations, Karla is known for her ability to lead through influence—aligning cross-functional teams, creating strategic clarity, and driving flawless execution in complex, high-stakes launches. She has built and led high performing teams and is a sought-after mentor for professionals in field reimbursement and career development across organizations. Although the patients may never know she exists, Karla and colleagues like her have spent years finding resources for the elderly, for minorities, for the overlooked, and for those who have been given up on—and she considers it among the most rewarding work of her life. Her commitment to healthcare equity and patient-centricity directly aligns with the mission of Indy Hematology Education and the

DRIVE initiative, which seeks to promote diversity, inclusion, and equitable access within cancer clinical research and patient care—particularly for medically underserved communities in Indiana. Outside of work, Karla is an avid flower gardener, a devoted dog mom, and a lover of all things "lake life." She and her husband, Tom, have been married for 20 years and are raising their two children—Ella (16) and Trey (13)—to be good humans.

Tara M. Graff, DO, MS

Director of Clinical Research; Mission Cancer and Blood part of University of Iowa Health Care
Director of Cellular Therapy Exigent Research

Dr. Graff obtained her master's degree in Immunology from Loyola University in Chicago and earned her Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine credentials from Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine in Bradenton, Florida in 2009. She completed her residency training in Internal Medicine and a fellowship in Hematology and Oncology at the Medical College of Wisconsin at Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital. She has led several clinical research projects and has published many original oncology and hematology articles. Dr. Graff is board certified in both Internal Medicine and Medical Oncology. Dr. Graff has worked at Mission Cancer and Blood in Des Moines IA for over 10 years and specializes in CLL and NHL. Dr. Graff serves on multiple National Lymphoma Advisory Boards, NHL Advisory Council and LBCL Steering Committee. She is a member of ECOG Clinical Trial Organization, Lymphoma Working Committee for the CIBMTR and sits on the Lymphoma Research Foundation (LRF). She has paired with LLS doing patient education for rural cancer patients as well as CAR-T and bispecific education for community oncologists. Dr. Graff is the cellular therapy lead for Exigent Research as well as co-chair for the malignant hematology council for Exigent Research. She is an educational speaker for many companies and is trained in MRD interpretation through Adaptive Biotech.

Dr. Graff serves as the Primary Investigator for multiple clinical trials both past and present and is the Clinical Director of the Clinical Trials Program for Mission Cancer and Blood.

Andrew Hantel, MD, MPH

Assistant Professor of Medicine; Harvard Medical School
Faculty member in the Divisions of Leukemia and Population Sciences; Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and the HMS Center for Bioethics

Andrew Hantel, MD, MPH is an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School and faculty member in the Divisions of Leukemia and Population Sciences at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and the HMS Center for Bioethics. He received his MD from Loyola University Chicago; trained in internal medicine, adult hematology/oncology, and medical ethics at the University of Chicago; and completed a post-doctoral fellowship in cancer population sciences at the Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center. Dr. Hantel's lab leverages health services and care delivery methods to address ethical dilemmas in cancer discovery and delivery. His current work focuses on equity in the contexts of research participation, artificial intelligence, and climate change.

Elias Jabbour, MD

Professor of Medicine; MD Anderson Cancer Center

Dr. Jabbour joined the MD Anderson Cancer Center faculty in 2007 and is currently a Professor of Medicine in the Department of Leukemia. He is actively involved in developmental therapeutics research in leukemia. Over the past 5 years he has assisted in developing chemotherapeutic and biologic agents in leukemias and contributed to the development of others. These include: 1) the Hyper CVAD-ofatumumab regimen in ALL; 2) clofarabine in myeloid malignancies; 3) hypomethylating agents in AML and MDS; 4) Tyrosine kinase therapy in CML; and 5) triple therapy in AML. This research has also provided insight into the biology of leukemias. He has extensively addressed the question of resistance to tyrosine kinase inhibitors and to analyze the outcome of these patients. We have identified different mechanisms of resistance and described the clinical significance of them. This has clinical significance in establishing new milestones and leading to personalized therapy. This has tremendous consequences at the scientific and financial levels. He was also actively associated with frontline studies of nilotinib and dasatinib which resulted in FDA approval of these agents for frontline CML therapy in 2010. In addition we have recently addressed the question of genomic instabilities in patients with low-risk MDS who may need earlier therapeutic intervention. This served as a rationale for the first study in the world randomizing such patients to either 5-azacitidine or decitabine. Identifying patients at risk and applying earlier intervention may significantly improve their prognosis. He is leading our efforts to test triple therapy in AML (nucleoside analogs + anthracyclines + cytarabine). The interim results from this randomized trial show a significant improvement in outcome in patients who receive the nucleoside analog clofarabine. This may change the standard of care for the management of patients with AML. Furthermore, I am currently investigating the benefit of adding humanized monoclonal antibody for the treatment of patients with ALL (ofatumumab and HCVAD) and collaborating in the development of monoclonal antibody studies in adult ALL. Finally, he has authored or co-authored hundreds of peer reviewed medical publications and have served on editorial boards of several scientific journals.

Craig M. Kessler, MD, MACP

Medical Director; Georgetown University Medical Center Hemophilia Treatment Center
Professor, Department of Medicine and Pathology, in the Division of Hematology/Oncology; Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center
Director, Coagulation Laboratory, Division of Laboratory Medicine, in the Department of Pathology; Georgetown University Medical Center

Dr. Craig Kessler is a professor, Department of Medicine and Pathology, in the Division of Hematology/Oncology at the Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center. Dr. Kessler is the Medical Director of the GUMC Hemophilia Treatment Center. He is also the Director, Coagulation Laboratory, Division of Laboratory Medicine, in the Department of Pathology. He received his medical degree from Tulane University School of Medicine and completed his residency at Ochsner Foundation Hospital and Clinic. He completed his fellowship in hematology at Johns Hopkins Hospital. Dr. Kessler is an expert in internal medicine and hematology and has special interests in anemias, bleeding disorders, coagulation and platelet disorders, hematologic malignancies, myeloproliferative diseases, thrombophilias and hemophilias, and treatment of hematologic diseases.

Rami Komrokji, MD

Vice chair of the Malignant Hematology Department; Moffitt Cancer Center
Professor in Medicine & Oncologic Sciences; College of Medicine at the University of South Florida

Dr. Komrokji is the Vice Chair of the Malignant Hematology Department at the Moffitt Cancer Center, Tampa, Florida. He is a senior member of the Malignant Hematology and Experimental Therapeutics Program at the Moffitt Cancer Center, and Professor in Medicine & Oncologic Sciences at the College of Medicine, at the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida. After earning a medical degree in 1996 from the Jordan University School of Medicine, Dr. Komrokji completed an internship and residency at Case Western University, St. Vincent Program. He then completed a fellowship at Strong Memorial Hospital, University of Rochester, in Hematology/Oncology and Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation.
Dr Komrokji is expert in myeloid neoplasms where he led several clinical trials and lectured worldwide. His work paved the FDA approval for luspatercept in myelodysplastic syndromes and for Pacritinib in myelofibrosis.

He has authored or co-authored more than 350 peer-reviewed manuscripts, 20 book chapters, and more than 1000 abstracts in Hematologic Malignancies. He served as member on the MDS Panel of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) and currently member of the NHLBI MDS natural history study steering committee and aplastic anemia and MDS foundation medical board of directors. He was member of the editorial board for Journal of Clinical Oncology (JCO). He is peer reviewer for several medical journals including Blood Journal, JCO and Leukemia Journal. He is a regularly invited speaker at national and international meetings and had won several awards in recognition of his work.

Dr. Komrokji's research interests are in Phase I and II Clinical Trials, and in the outcome research in hematologic malignancies with focus on myeloid neoplasms. His clinical interests are Myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS), Acute Myeloid Leukemias, and Myeloproliferative neoplasms.

Catherine E. Lai, MD, MPH

Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine (Hematology-Oncology); University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine
Physician Leader, Leukemia Clinical Research Unit

Catherine Lai, MD, MPH, is an Associate Professor and the Physician Leader of the Leukemia Clinical Research Unit at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Lai specializes in detecting, monitoring, and treating acute leukemia and myeloid malignancies in adults. Dr. Lai's research focuses on integrating health outcomes into clinical trials with novel therapeutics, with a focus on measuring physiologic age and interventions to improve early mortality and overall survival, minimize treatment toxicity and maximize tolerability to therapy.

Most recently, Dr. Lai served as the Director of Leukemia at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital's Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center in Washington, DC. She completed her Hematology/Oncology fellowship at the National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Lai received her master's in Public Health in Epidemiology from George Washington University.

Richard A. Larson, MD

Director of Hematologic Malignancies Clinical Research Program; University of Chicago Cancer Center

Richard A. Larson, MD is Professor of Medicine in the Section of Hematology/Oncology and Director of the Hematologic Malignancies Clinical Research Program at the University of Chicago. He received his medical degree from the Stanford University School of Medicine in 1977, and completed his post-doctoral training in Internal Medicine, Hematology, and Medical Oncology at the University of Chicago. He has been a member of the faculty in the Section of Hematology/Oncology and the Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Chicago since 1983.

Matthew A. Lunning, DO, FACP

Interim Chief, UNMC Division of Hematology; University of Nebraska Medical Center
Professor, UNMC Division of Hematology; University of Nebraska Medical Center
UNMC Assistant Vice Chancellor of Clinical Research; University of Nebraska Medical Center

Dr. Lunning received his medical degree from Des Moines University in 2006. Dr. Lunning completed his internal medicine residency at UNMC where he served as Chief Medical Resident. He completed his Hematology/Oncology fellowship and served as the Hematology Chief Fellow at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Dr. Lunning returned to UNMC in 2013 and has been active in clinic research, research mentoring, education, and patient care. Dr. Lunning was the recipient of the Distinguish Scientist Award in 2019.

Dr. Lunning has served on several National Comprehensive Cancer Network's guidelines committees including the Immunotherapy Toxicity & T-cell lymphoma panels. He has served as an invited member of ASCO's Cancer Education Committee on the Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma. He is the co-organizer of the Pan Pacific Lymphoma Conference.

Medha D. Makhlouf, JD

Founding Director of the Medical-Legal Partnership Clinic; Penn State Dickinson Law and Department of Public Health Sciences, Penn State College of Medicine
Elsie de R. and Samuel P. Orlando Distinguished Professor; Penn State Dickinson Law
Professor of Law; Penn State Dickinson Law

Medha D. Makhlouf is a professor of law and the founding director of the Medical-Legal Partnership Clinic at Penn State Dickinson Law. She is also an assistant professor (by courtesy) in the Department of Public Health Sciences at Penn State College of Medicine.

Professor Makhlouf's research interests lie at the intersection of health law, immigrants' rights, and poverty law and policy. Her current work focuses on immigrant access to health care and the many ways in which immigration status functions as a social determinant of health. Professor Makhlouf's scholarship has been published or is forthcoming in the New York University Law Review, the Boston University Law Review, California Law Review Online, the Yale Journal of Health Policy, Law & Ethics, and several other academic journals. Professor Makhlouf was selected as a Health Law Scholar by the American Society of Law, Medicine & Ethics and the Saint Louis University Center for Health Law Studies based on the originality of the thesis of her article, "Health Justice for Immigrants," and its contribution to the scholarly literature. Her work on changes to public charge policy has been cited by litigants and amici curiae in four federal lawsuits challenging the 2019 regulations expanding the scope of public charge inadmissibility.

As director of the Medical-Legal Partnership Clinic, Professor Makhlouf supervises law students in direct representation of individuals who have health-harming legal needs. The Clinic aims to reduce health disparities and improve health in vulnerable communities through collaboration with medical providers and public health practitioners. Currently, the Clinic focuses on representing immigrants in matters involving access to health-supporting public benefits. Professor Makhlouf was named a 2020 Atlantic Fellow for Health Equity to support the Clinic's work. Professor Makhlouf received her undergraduate degree magna cum laude from Brown University and her law degree from Yale Law School. After law school, she served as a public interest fellow at the Political Asylum/Immigration Representation Project in Boston and at Asylum Access in Quito, Ecuador; as an associate attorney at Ropes & Gray LLP in Boston; and as the Medical-Legal Partnership Staff Attorney at the Central West Justice Center in Worcester, Massachusetts. She joined the faculty of Penn State Dickinson Law in 2015.

Madison Moser , BSN, RN

Clinic/Triage Nurse; Indiana Hemophilia & Thrombosis Center, Inc.

Madison Moser is a Clinic/Triage Nurse at Innovative Hematology and the Indiana Hemophilia and Thrombosis Center with 9 years of nursing experience. She spent 3.5 years working inpatient on a hematology/oncology unit caring for patients with hemophilia, sickle cell disease, and cancer diagnoses where she administered chemotherapy and factor concentrates. Madison attended the University of Southern Indiana for her nursing degree. Madison was a participant in the AMPATH-IHI Twinning Program and travelled to Eldoret, Kenya in 2024 to advance nursing care at Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital for patients living with sickle cell disease and hemophilia. In her free time, Madison enjoys athletics, travelling, and spending time with her husband and two girls.

Chijioke C. Nze, MD, MPH

Assistant Professor in Department of Lymphoma / Myeloma; MD Anderson Cancer Center

Chijioke Nze, M.D., MPH, is an Assistant Professor in the department of Lymphoma and Myeloma at the University of Texas, MD Anderson Cancer Center and is a specialist in lymphoma care. Dr. Nze received his Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry from the University of California, Santa Barbara followed by his MD from Harvard Medical School and a Master in Public Health (MPH) in health policy from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. He completed his Internal Medicine residency at the Brigham and Women's Hospital and his hematology and Oncology fellowship at MD Anderson where he served as Hematology Chief Fellow in his final year. He is a Principal Investigator on multiple Phase I-III clinical trials in follicular lymphoma and serves as MD Anderson's site principle investigator for the Lymphoma Epidemiology of Outcomes (LEO) Cohort Study. Dr Nze's research focuses on advancing equitable access to clinical trials and improving outcomes for underserved lymphoma patients. He leads clinical research efforts at Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) Hospital, a safety-net institution, and chairs its multidisciplinary hematologic malignancy tumor board. He also co-leads the Blood Cancer United (formally LLS) IMPACT initiative with Dr. Christopher Flowers, expanding trial access across South Texas and developing culturally responsive engagement strategies. His early work is supported by several career development awards including the ASCO Young Investigator Award, the Robert A. Winn Excellence in Clinical Trials Career Development Award and Calebresi K12 award. Dr. Nze's long-term goal is to build a sustainable, community-anchored trial network that integrates patient feedback and health policy to drive inclusive innovation in lymphoma care.

Kristi Orbaugh, RN, MSN, RNP, AOCN

Adult Nurse Practitioner; Community Hospital Oncology Physicians

Kristi K Orbaugh MSN, RNP, AOCN has spent her entire career in the oncology field. She received her undergraduate degree from Purdue University and her master's degree from Indiana University Purdue University of Indianapolis. She works at Community Hospital Cancer Center North which is an affiliate of MD Anderson as a nurse practitioner. She has published several oncology related articles. She has presented locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Kristi is passionate about oncology and enjoys presenting and providing oncology education on regional, national and international level.

Electra D. Paskett, PhD

Marion N. Rowley Chair in Cancer Research; The Ohio State University
Director of the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control; The Ohio State University College of Medicine
Professor in the Division of Epidemiology; The Ohio State University College of Public Health
Associate Director for Population Sciences; The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center
Program Leader of the Cancer Control Program; The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center
Director of the Center for Cancer Health Equity; The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center - James Cancer Hospital

Electra D. Paskett became the Marion N. Rowley Professor of Cancer Research at The Ohio State University in 2002. She is the director of the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control in the College of Medicine, a professor in the Division of Epidemiology in the College of Public Health and the associate director for population sciences and program leader of the Cancer Control Program in Ohio State's Comprehensive Cancer Center. Dr. Paskett is also director of the Center for Cancer Health Equity at the James Cancer Hospital. Her research program is nationally recognized for studying cancer health disparities. It has four major areas of focus and has evolved to employ a "team science approach" to understanding and intervening in these problems, which include energy balance and cancer prevention; promoting the use of early-detection exams; improving access to diagnostic and treatment services; and lymphedema prevention.

Naveen Pemmaraju, MD

Associate Professor in the Department of Leukemia; MD Anderson Cancer Center

Dr. Naveen Pemmaraju is an Assistant Professor Director, Department of Leukemia, Division of Cancer Medicine, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX. 2011-present. He completed undergraduate studies with a Bachelor of Science cum laude in Cell and Molecular Biology at Tulane University. He received his medical degree at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, completed Internal Medicine training at the Osler Medical Program of Johns Hopkins (Barker Firm), and completed a fellowship in Hematology/Oncology at MD Anderson Cancer Center. Dr. Pemmaraju is board certified in Internal Medicine, Hematology and Oncology. He is a clinical investigator with clinical and research interests focused in the areas of analyzing patient characteristics and outcomes as well as development of novel therapies for patients with myeloproliferative neoplasms (MPN), acute myeloid leukemia (AML), and blastic plasmacytoid dendritic cell neoplasm (BPDCN). Dr. Pemmaraju has extensive experience with clinical trial design, enrollment of patients, and serving as the PI or co-PI of several enrolling and upcoming clinical trials at his institution. He has authored or co-authored over 50 scientific/medical publications in the peer-reviewed literature. Dr. Pemmaraju serves as the co-course director for the Leukemia rotation and is a member of the Fellowship Educational Steering Committee at MD Anderson. He has also published his original work in the field of medical humanities (both prose and poetry) in peer-reviewed medical journals, and is an active member of the medical social media community; he is the founder of #mpnsm, or myeloproliferative neoplasms in social media, a Twitter-based community focused on discussion of topics of interest to MPN researchers, providers and patients during medical conferences and throughout the year.

Cassandra Perkey, PharmD, BCOP

Regional Clinical Pharmacist, Pharmacy Operations; American Oncology Network

Dr. Cassandra (Cassie) Perkey is a board-certified oncology pharmacist and a regional clinical pharmacist for the American Oncology Network. In this role, she provides comprehensive pharmaceutical support to multiple community-based cancer centers across the Midwest. She earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Ohio Northern University, followed by a PGY-1 pharmacy residency at Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio, and a PGY-2 oncology pharmacy residency at Barnes-Jewish Hospital/Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. While Dr. Perkey supports the treatment of all cancer types within her region, her primary areas of interest include breast cancer and the expansion of cellular therapy in the community oncology setting.

Tycel Phillips, MD

Associate Professor of Medicine; City of Hope

Dr. Phillips earned his medical degree from Rush University, followed by a residency in internal medicine at the John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County in Chicago. His fellowship training in oncology/hematology took place at University Hospitals in Cleveland. Before joining City of Hope, he was a clinical associate professor at the University of Michigan, where he was appointed the Maria Reinhardt DeCesare Research Professor of Blood Cancers and Bone Marrow Transplantation.

Raajit K. Rampal, MD, PhD

Director of the Myeloproliferative Neoplasms Program; Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

Director of the Center for Hematologic Malignancies; Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

Dr. Raajit Rampal is a hematologist-oncologist who specializes in the treatment of myeloproliferative neoplasms (MPNs) and leukemia. He is dedicated to providing his patients with the highest quality care, taking into account the individual needs of each patient and their family. In addition to his clinical work, Dr. Rampal is an active researcher focused on developing new and innovative approaches to treating MPNs and leukemia. His research seeks to better understand the genetic events that contribute to the development and progression of these diseases, with the goal of advancing targeted therapies for affected patients. He also leads and conducts novel clinical trials involving molecularly targeted agents for individuals with MPNs and leukemia. Through these efforts, he remains committed to improving outcomes for people living with these diseases.

Sam Ranger, MS

Chief Program Officer; Indy Hematology Education Inc.

Sam Ranger is the Chief Program Officer at Indy Hematology Education. In his role, he supports oncology education initiatives with a focus on HCP education for improved patient outcomes, as well as equity, inclusion, and community centered care. His professional interests include increasing diversity in clinical trials, advancing patient outcomes, and ensuring accessible, evidence-based cancer education for both providers and patients. Sam holds a Master's degree in anatomy, cell biology, and physiology.

David Reeves, PharmD, BCOP

Professor of Pharmacy Practice; Butler University: College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

Clinical Pharmacy Specialist – Hematology/Oncology; Franciscan Health, FPN Oncology/Hematology Specialists

David is a board certified oncology pharmacist and professor of pharmacy practice for the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences at Butler University. In addition, he serves as a clinical pharmacy specialist in hematology/oncology at Franciscan Physician Network Oncology/Hematology Specialists in Indianapolis, IN.

Gilles Salles , MD, PhD

Chief, Lymphoma Service, Steven A. Greenberg Chair, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

Dr. Gilles Salles previously served as a Professor of Medicine (haematology) at Université Lyon-1, (1996) and is currently the chief of the Lymphoma Service, within the Division of Hematologic Malignancies, Department of Medicine at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. He is also associate editor at the journal Haematologica.

Salles is also a member of several professional societies, including the American Society of Hematology, the American Society of Clinical Oncology, the European Hematology Association and the French Society of Hematology.

He was designated as "Chevalier de l'Ordre du Mérite" in 2016 and received the Jose Carreras Award from the European Hematology Association in 2020.

Sonali M. Smith, MD, FASCO

Elwood V. Jensen Professorship of Medicine; UChicago Medicine
Chief, Section of Hematology/Oncology; UChicago Medicine

Dr. Sonali M. Smith is the Elwood V. Jensen Professor of Medicine, Section Chief of Hematology/Oncology, Co-Leader of the Cancer Service Line, and Co-Director of the Lymphoma Program at the University of Chicago in the Department of Medicine. She is a clinical investigator in lymphoma and a clinical expert in Hodgkin and non-Hodgkin lymphomas. As faculty member at the University of Chicago since 2001, she has over 200 publications in peer-reviewed journals and has written over 25 review articles on lymphoid malignancies. She is particularly interested in targeted agents and pathway inhibitors, and has first and senior author publications through cooperative group trials and investigator-initiated trials. She has leadership roles including Vice-Chair of the SWOG Lymphoma Committee, immediate past-Chair of the Lymphoma Research Foundation Scientific Advisory Board, past-chair of the ASCO Communications Committee, past-Chair of the ASCO Annual Meeting Scientific Committee (2022), co-chair of the 2022 AACR Advances in Malignant Lymphoma, and co-chair of the ASH Meeting on Hematologic Malignancies. In 2025, she was elected to the ASCO Board of Directors for a 4-year term. She is one of the founding members and Steering Committee members of the international Women in Lymphoma (WiL) group. She has won numerous teaching awards and considers mentorship a key aspect of her career.

Richard M. Stone, MD

Lunder Family Chair in Leukemia and Chief of Staff; Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Professor of Medicine; Harvard Medical School

Richard Stone, MD, is the Lunder Family Chair in Leukemia and Chief of Staff at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. He is also Director of Translational Research for the Adult Leukemia Program, at DFCI, and Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Stone is nationally recognized for translational and clinical research in blood and bone marrow malignancies including acute leukemia, myeloproliferative disorders, and myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS). He has had a significant leadership role in the development of at least five recently approved agents for the treatment of acute myeloid leukemia (AML).

In addition to his work at Dana-Farber, Dr. Stone is a Vice Chair of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) MDS panel and is also a member of the NCCN AML panel. He previously served as the Chair of the Alliance Leukemia Committee, Chair of the Medical Advisory Board of the Aplastic Anemia and MDS International Foundation, and the Chair of the ABIM Oncology Board.

Dr. Stone has participated extensively in teaching medical students, residents, and fellows, as well as graduate medical education courses on leukemia and related disorders. He is the author of many academic papers that have been published in the New England Journal of Medicine, Blood, Leukemia as well as numerous other journals. He has also served on the editorial boards of Leukemia Research, Blood and Journal of Clinical Oncology.

Dr. Stone earned his medical degree from Harvard Medical School in 1981. He completed his internal medicine residency training and served as Chief Medical Resident at Brigham and Women's Hospital. He completed his hematology-oncology fellowship at Dana-Farber.

Steven P. Treon, MD, MA, PhD, FGRCP, FACP

Director; Bing Center for Waldenström's Macroglobulinemia Research
Professor of Medicine; Harvard Medical School

Professor Treon is the Director of the Bing Center for Waldenstrom's Macroglobuliemia (WM) at DFCI and a Professor of Medicine at HMS. Using whole-genome sequencing, his laboratory was the first to clarify the genetic basis of WM by identifying MYD88 (L265P) as a highly recurring somatic mutation in 95% of WM patients. This finding has permitted differentiation of WM from other B-cell malignancies that share overlapping characteristics, and was adopted in WHO and NCCN guidelines as a supportive diagnostic marker for WM. His lab also identified the CXCR4 mutation found in 40% of WM patients. Professor Treon's lab has focused on the development of novel agents to target both mutated MYD88 and CXCR4. His lab was the first to report that Bruton's tyrosine kinase (BTK) was a downstream target of MYD88 L265P mutation, in a study that enabled a clinical trial that led to the investigation, adoption and approval of BTK-inhibitors for WM. Professor Treon has also made contributions to the investigation and advancement of most novel agents used for the treatment of WM. He served as the PI or co-investigator for prospective clinical trials which included the monoclonal antibodies rituximab and alemtuzumab; the nucleoside analogue fludarabine with rituximab; the immunomodulatory agents thalidomide, lenalidomide, and pomalidomide with rituximab; the proteasome inhibitors bortezomib and carfilzomib alone and with rituximab; the BTK inhibitor ibrutinib and zanubrutinib, the CXCR4 antagonists ulocuplomab and mavorixafor in combination with ibrutinib; and the BCL-2 inhibitor venetoclax alone and in combination with ibrutinib. These studies enabled inclusion of many of these agents into WM Consensus and NCCN Treatment guidelines. These studies also identified drug toxicities particular for or more pronounced in WM patients, including the IgM flare to rituximab, peripheral neuropathy (3-fold higher) to bortezomib, lenalidomide-related aggravated anemia, late immune thrombocytopenia to alemtuzumab, and secondary malignancies associated with nucleoside analogues that impacted treatment guidelines and led to trials examining alternative treatment strategies. Professor Treon is also the principal organizer of the International Workshops on WM, a biannual event that brings hundreds of basic science and clinical investigators from around the world. Key consensus recommendations are adopted at these meetings that help guide management and response evaluation of WM patients. Professor Treon was also the chair of the 17th International Workshop on Multiple Myeloma, the largest workshop held to date for this disease. For his efforts, he has received the Robert A. Kyle Award, the Jan Gosta Waldenstrom Lifetime Achievement Award, and was elected a fellow to the American College of Physicians, and the Royal College of Physicians, London UK.

Saad Z. Usmani, MD, MBA, FACP, FRCP

Chief of Myeloma Service; Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
Professor of Medicine; Cornell University - Weill Cornell Medical College

Dr. Saad Zafar Usmani received his medical education at Allama Iqbal Medical College in Lahore, Pakistan. He completed a residency in internal medicine at Sinai-Grace Hospital/Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan and a fellowship in hematology and oncology at the University of Connecticut Health Center in Farmington, Connecticut. He then joined the Myeloma Institute for Research & Therapy, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock, AR in 2010 as the Director of Developmental Therapeutics and Assistant Professor of Medicine. He was recruited to the Levine Cancer Institute/Atrium Health in 2013 as the inaugural Division Chief of Plasma Cell Disorders and Director of Clinical Research for Hematologic Malignancies where he built an internationally renowned myeloma program. He was then recruited in 2021 as the Chief of Myeloma Service at MSKCC.

Dr. Usmani is board-certified in internal medicine, medical oncology, and hematology. He holds membership and leadership roles on national/international committees, including the International Myeloma Working Group, the ALLIANCE Myeloma Committee (Chair), the American Society of Hematology (ASH), the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), the American Society of Transplant & Cellular Therapy, and the National Cancer Institute Myeloma Steering Committee. Dr. Usmani has served as the Vice-Chair of the SWOG Myeloma Committee and has served as chair for the ASH Scientific Committee on Plasma Cell Neoplasia, and the ASCO Scientific Committee on Plasma Cell Disorders.

He has received several international awards recognizing his clinical and translational research contributions to the field, including the Celgene Young Investigator Award for Clinical Research, COMY Award for Excellence in Myeloma Research, LLS Scholar in Clinical Research, the International Myeloma Society Bart Barlogie Award for Clinical and Translational Research, and the LLS CDP Achievement Award. Dr. Usmani has authored/co-authored more than 260 peer-reviewed research manuscripts (NEJM, Lancet, JCO, Cancer Cell, Blood, Leukemia, etc.). Active in clinical and translational research, Dr. Usmani has research interests focus on plasma cell disorders—in particular, high-risk multiple myeloma.

Peter Voorhees, MD

Professor of Medicine; Wake Forest University School of Medicine
Chief, Plasma Cell Disorders Division; Atrium Health / Levine Cancer Institute
Associate Director of Clinical Research; Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Comprehensive Cancer Center

Dr. Peter Voorhees received his medical degree from the University of Michigan. He continued his postgraduate studies with an internal medicine residency/chief residency at the University of Wisconsin, and a hematology-oncology fellowship at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Voorhees is Director of Outreach for Hematologic Malignancies, Plasma Cells Disorder Program, Department of Hematologic Oncology and Blood Disorders at Levine Cancer Institute, Charlotte, North Carolina. He was previously an assistant professor in the Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Hematology-Oncology, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Michael Weimann, MD, FACP

Vice President; Indy Hematology Education, Inc.
Regional President & CEO; Ascension Michigan, Metro West Region
President, Ascension Medical Group (MI)
Clinical Professor of Medicine at Michigan State University, College of Human Medicine
Regional President & CEO, Ascension Michigan - Metro West Region and President, Ascension Medical Group (MI) and Clinical Professor of Medicine at Michigan State University College of Human Medicine.

Dr. Wiemann is a medical oncologist and CoFounder of the Indy Hematology Review. While in Indianapolis, he held several leadership positions at St. Vincent Hospital and Health Center, including Medical Director of Oncology, Chief Medical Officer, and Interim President.

Meaghan Wiggins, LMHC, OPN-CG

Art Therapist; IU Health University and Simon Cancer Center
A Chicago native, Meaghan earned a Master's in Art Therapy from Herron School of Art and Design at IU. Both art and mental health have been long standing passions of hers and she feels that she was always meant to do this work. She has worked with cancer patients and their families in the non-profit sector and now works alongside patients with a multitude of chronic illnesses. Additionally, she has experience as an oncology patient navigator, identifying barriers to treatments and finding appropriate solutions.

Esta Works, MSN, BSN

Nurse Practitioner; Community Hospital Oncology Physicians

Esta Works is a nurse practitioner at Community Hospital North/MD Anderson Cancer Center in Indianapolis, Indiana. A native Hoosier, she obtained her BSN from Indiana University and began her career as an ICU nurse in the the Community Health Network. Her introduction to hematology/oncology was in the mid 2000s as a travel nurse, this led to a staff nurse position in the Indiana University Bone Marrow Transplant program, where she remained until she completed her MSN at Indiana University in 2009. After completing her MSN, she relocated to Nashville, Tennessee after accepting a position as a Nurse Practitioner with the Bone Marrow Transplant team at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, where her love of malignant hematology patients was solidified. In 2017, she returned to Indianapolis and the Community Health Network and accepted a position with Community Hospital Oncology Physicians and became the inpatient rounding nurse practitioner for Dr. Sumeet Bhatia. In many cases, Esta is the first hematology provider patients meet at the time of their diagnosis. She's passionate that there is someone to walk patients and families through those initial days of diagnosis and treatment and enjoys caring for them along the continuum of their disease process.

Jennifer Woyach, MD

Director of the Division of Hematology; The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center
Professor of Medicine in the Division of Hematology; The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center

The Bertha Bouroncle M.D. and Andrew Pereny Chair of Medicine; The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center
Co-Director, Leukemia and Hematologic Malignancies Research Program; The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center

Dr. Jennifer Woyach is the director and a professor in the division of Hematology, the section chair of Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL), and a physician scientist focused on translational research in CLL at the Ohio State University. Her laboratory interests include experimental therapeutics in CLL with a focus on signaling pathways and kinase inhibition. She has extensive experience studying BTK inhibitors, resistance mechanisms associated with irreversible BTK inhibitors, and strategies to overcome resistance.

Neal S. Young, MD

Bethesda, Maryland

Key Abstracts: The Complement Inhibitor Eculizumab in Paroxysmal Nocturnal Hemoglobinuria (Sep. 21, 2006); Regression of metastatic renal-cell carcinoma after nonmyeloablative allogeneic peripheral-blood stem-cell transplantation (September 14, 2000); Current concepts in the pathophysiology and treatment of aplastic anemia (October 15, 2006); Diagnosis and management of paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria (December 1, 2005)

Transcending Borders to Treat Mantle Cell Lymphoma: A Conversation with Dr. Martin Dreyling

Written by Nicola Donelan

Dr. Martin Dreyling's career exemplifies a seamless blend of academic research, clinical expertise, and global collaboration. In this interview, we highlight Dr. Dreyling's transformative contributions to hematology and oncology, from groundbreaking genetic discoveries in mantle cell lymphoma (MCL) to global collaborations that advance treatment standards, address disparities, and streamline the clinical research process for more equitable and impactful patient care.

From Cardiology Aspirations to Hematology Leadership

Dr. Dreyling began his medical career with aspirations in cardiology but found his true calling in oncology during a rotation at the universiy hospital in Bonn, Germany.

He recalls, *"I realized there was a special connection between oncology patients and myself. This was a place where I could truly help."*

This connection sparked a journey that took him across continents—from conducting pure research in Chicago to leading clinical studies in Germany. His early research in Chicago, focusing on rare lymphomas, laid the groundwork for his later contributions to identifying genetic mutations pivotal in MCL.

A Milestone Discovery in Mantle Cell Lymphoma

One of Dr. Dreyling's most significant achievements was his work on identifying the genetic alteration P16 (now CDKN2A), a tumor suppressor gene involved in cell cycle regulation. His findings challenged the prevailing belief that upstream genetic alterations in MCL were inconsequential due to downstream mutations like Cyclin D1 overexpression.

"It was the stone age of genetic research," he notes, reflecting on the 1990s.

Decades later, these early discoveries remain critical in understanding MCL's clinical risk factors.

The Evolution of MCL Treatment

Dr. Dreyling has witnessed a dramatic transformation in the understanding and management of MCL. Early in his career, MCL was considered an untreatable disease. Advances in diagnostics, including the identification of Cyclin D1 as a hallmark marker, have improved recognition and treatment outcomes. The introduction of Rituximab in the 1990s marked a pivotal moment, significantly increasing response rates and prolonging disease-free periods.

Recent breakthroughs include the integration of targeted therapies and immunotherapy into MCL treatment.

Dr. Dreyling emphasizes, *"We are now moving away from chemotherapy. Targeted therapies are not only more effective but also better tolerated."*

These therapies promise a future where patients can avoid the debilitating side effects of high-dose chemotherapy and stem cell transplants.

Global Collaboration: Breaking Boundaries in Research

As a former president of the German Lymphoma Alliance and an active participant in international collaborations, Dr. Drey-

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ling champions global efforts to address disparities in MCL research and treatment.

"International trials allow us to pool resources and generate meaningful data, especially for rare diseases like MCL," he explains.

Collaborative initiatives like the Triangle Trial, spanning 14 European countries, exemplify this approach.

Large, collaborative initiatives that transcends national borders, uniting researchers and institutions across Europe and beyond are most effective. Based on the principle that meaningful study results require broad, diverse patient populations rather than focusing on a single country, such as Germany, France, or Italy.

Reducing the cost of clinical research

The escalating cost of clinical research is a pressing concern, particularly as it often fails to translate into proportional improvements in patient safety or care. *"Studies became more expensive without improving the safety of our patients,"* explains Dr. Dreyling. A collaborative initiative, referred to as The Coalition for Reducing Bureaucracy in Clinical Trials, addresses the growing administrative and financial burdens of clinical trials in Europe, exacerbated by stringent regulatory laws that have significantly increased costs without necessarily improving patient safety. This initiative is not limited to hematology but spans multiple disciplines, including e.g. oncology, cardiology, neurology, and even psychiatry.

This cross-specialty collaboration highlights a unified effort to streamline clinical research processes and make them more efficient and impactful. Efforts are also being made to engage U.S. counterparts, with the FDA participating in discussions to foster similar collaborative frameworks internationally.

Dr. Dreyling also highlights the importance of bridging the gap between academic and industry-sponsored research. While companies drive drug development, academic trials answer critical questions about optimizing patient outcomes and comparing standards of care. He notes that regulatory hurdles and administrative burdens have made such studies increasingly expensive, even in affluent regions. Streamlining these processes, he believes, is vital for fostering innovative clinical research and ensuring equitable access to breakthroughs.

Addressing Disparities in Access
Despite rapid advancements, access to cutting-edge treatments remains uneven. Geographic disparities, particularly between wealthier and resource-limited regions, pose significant challenges.

"CAR T-cell therapy, for instance, is transformative but largely unavailable in much of the developing world," Dr. Dreyling points out.

He advocates for collaborative efforts to make these therapies more affordable and accessible, ensuring that all patients, regardless of location, can benefit from the latest innovations.

The Future of Lymphoma Treatment

Looking ahead, Dr. Dreyling envisions a future where immunotherapies become mainstream. Current first-generation treatments like CAR T-cell therapy and bispecific antibodies, while groundbreaking, are labor-intensive and costly. However, he believes that advancements in technology and manufacturing will make these therapies more accessible.

"In ten years, we will see off-the-shelf immunotherapies that are easier to administer and far more affordable," he predicts.

Dr. Martin Dreyling's work exemplifies the power of combining scientific discovery and collaboration with compassionate care. As he continues to push the boundaries of lymphoma research, his legacy inspires a global community of researchers and clinicians dedicated to improving patient outcomes. By combining technological innovation with global collaboration, Dr. Dreyling foresees a paradigm shift in how lymphoma is understood and treated.

2026 T. HOWARD LEE AWARD RECIPIENT

Dr. Martin Dreyling, MD

Dr. Martin Dreyling is Professor of Hematology at the Department of Hematology, Hospices Civils de Lyon and the University Claude Bernard, Lyon, France, Chairman, GELA

T. HOWARD LEE AWARD RECIPIENTS

The late T. Howard Lee, MD, founder and President Emeritus, Hematology Oncology of Indiana, PC (Indianapolis, IN). The following respected individuals have been presenters and recipients at the T. Howard Lee Keynote Lecture:

2003: Professor Bertrand Coiffier, MD
Professor of Hematology at the Department of Hematology, Hospices Civils de Lyon and the University Claude Bernard, Lyon, France, Chairman, GELA

2004: Kanti Rai, MD
Past President of American Society of Hematology, ASH, Chief, Division of Hematology/Oncology, Long Island Jewish Medical Center, Professor of Medicine, Albert Einstein College of Medicine

2005: Claire Dearden, MBBS
Dr Claire Dearden is Consultant Hematologist and Head of the Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL) Unit at The Royal Marsden and The Institute of Cancer Research, and Medical Director of the South West London Cancer Network.

2006: Sandra Horning, MD
Professor of Oncology, Sanford University, Past President of The American Society of Oncology, ASCO

2007: Lewis R. Silverman, MD
Director, Myelodysplastic Syndrome and Myeloproliferative Disease Program, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York, NY

2008: Neal Young, MD
Chief of the Hematology Branch of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, National Institute of Health, Bethesda, MD

2009: Professor Michael Pfreundschuh, MD
Professor and Director of Medical Oncology, Department of Internal Medicine, Saarland University, and Chairman, German Lymphoma Group

2010: James Armitage, MD
Past President of ASCO, Joe Shapiro Professor of Medicine, and Past Dean, University of Nebraska Medical School, Omaha, NE

2011: Michael Keating, MBBS
Professor of Medicine and Internist, Department of Leukemia, Division of Cancer Medicine, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX

2012: Kenneth Anderson, MD
Kraft Family Professor of Medicine, Department of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Medical Director, Kraft Family Blood Center, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA

2013: Susan O'Brien, MD
Ashbel Smith Professor and Chief of the Section of Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia, Department of Leukemia at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

2014: Ross Levine, MD
Associate Attending Physician at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, Associate Professor of Medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College, New York, NY

2015: Stephen Ansell, MD, PhD
Professor of Medicine, Mayo Clinic Department of Hematology at the Mayo Clinic, MN

2016: David Porter, MD
Abramson Cancer Center, University of Pennsylvania Health System, Jodi Fisher Horowitz Professor of Leukemia Care Excellence Director, Blood and Marrow Transplantation, Philadelphia, PA

2017: Bruce Cheson, MD
Deputy Chief, Division of Hematology/ Oncology in the Department of Medicine, Head of Hematology and Professor of Medicine, Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center, Georgetown University Hospital, Washington, DC

2018: Thomas Kipps, MD, PhD
Deputy Director of Research, Moores UCSD Cancer Center; Professor of Medicine UC San Diego, School of Medicine, San Diego, CA

2019: Pier Luigi Zinzani, MD, PhD
Professor of Hematology, Head of Lymphoma Group, Institute of Hematology, "L. e A. Seràgnoli", University of Bologna, Bologna, Italy

2020: Edward Stadtmauer, MD
Professor of Medicine and Section Chief of the Hematologic Malignancies in the Division of Hematology-Oncology at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

2021: Ranjana Advani, MD
Saul A. Rosenberg Professor of Lymphoma at Stanford University School of Medicine and Physician Leader of the Lymphoma Clinical Care Program, Stanford, CA

2022: Sonali Smith, MD, FASCO
Elwood V. Jensen Professor of Medicine, Section Chief of Hematology/Oncology, Co-Leader of the Cancer Service Line, and Co-Director of the Lymphoma Program at the University of Chicago in the Department of Medicine, Chicago, IL

2023: Gilles Salles, MD, PhD
Chief of the Lymphoma Service at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, NY

2024: Robert Brodsky, MD
Johns Hopkins Family Professor of Medicine and Oncology, Director, Division of Hematology Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD

2025: Christopher Flowers, MD, MS, FASCO
The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Division Head of Cancer Medicine, Houston, TX

Honoring The Life And Legacy Of Dr. T. Howard Lee:

A Physician, Mentor, And Father With Compassion And Vision physician, Mentor, And Father With Compassion And Vision

In a career spanning decades, Dr. Truman (T.) Howard Lee revolutionized cancer care in the Indianapolis community and exemplified a life dedicated to service, compassion, and mentorship. As a pioneering oncologist, founder of Hematology Oncology of Indiana (HOI), and cherished family man, his influence extended far beyond the clinic walls.

A Pioneer in Oncology and Medicine

Dr. Lee's journey in medicine was shaped by his early life as the son of missionary parents in South America. These formative years instilled in him a deep understanding of service and respect for all people. "He learned at a very early age how to ensure that every human was treated equally and respectfully," reflected Dr. Ruemu Birhiray, CEO of Indy Hematology Education and one of Dr. Lee's mentees.

When Dr. Lee founded HOI, he brought this humanistic approach to his practice, building a culture centered on compassion and inclusivity. At a time when oncology was driven more by clinical intuition than by data, Dr. Lee's vast experience and dedication saved countless lives. Under his leadership, HOI has become one of the city's most diverse and inclusive oncology practices.

Mentorship and Influence on the Medical Community

Dr. Lee's mentorship was legendary. Dr. Birhiray credited him with setting the standard for a selfless, patient-centric approach to medicine. "He always moved beyond just being a patient's doctor," Dr. Birhiray shared. "He made sure he was always there for them beyond just being a doctor." Lee's selflessness and kindness extended beyond his patients as Dr. Birhiray remembers when he first joined HOI; Dr. Lee took the Birhiray family to their first Indy500.

"He took us to the Indy500 out of his coffers, and we went with his family, so he wasn't just kind to you in the office, but he made sure that he brought you into the practice and created a family environment around you."

Despite emphasizing that medicine was not a 9-to-5 job but a lifestyle and frequently referring to the field as "a jealous mistress," Dr. Lee excellently balanced his responsibilities as a physician with his role as a devoted father and husband.

A Devoted Father and Family Man

Karen Lee, Dr. Lee's daughter, fondly remembers her father as a man who cherished family adventures and celebrated her accomplishments with pride. "One of my favorite memories was loading up the motorhome and heading out on adventures to the Great Smokey Mountains, Disney World, and the beaches of Florida," she shared. "He always made sure we found memorable activities to do at each location."

Dr. Lee created special moments even at home. Karen reminisced about Sunday Jeep rides with stick-shift driving lessons on dirt roads, always ending with a hot fudge sundae at Dairy Queen. "He was always my biggest supporter," she said. "He loved boasting about me to anyone who would listen."

Dr. Lee's emphasis on education profoundly influenced Karen's life. "He always encouraged me and others to pursue higher education," she noted. "That motivation is a big reason why I pursued my bachelor's and master's degrees."

Commemorating His Legacy Through Education

Indy Hematology Education named its keynote lecture series in honor of Dr. Lee's commitment to education. "Dr. Lee embodied the spirit of our mission to improve outcomes through education," Dr. Birhiray explained. "There was no one else more deserving of this honor."

EXHIBITOR LISTING

As of February 20, 2026

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Community Health Network MD Anderson Cancer Center
Community Hospital Oncology Physicians
Corcept Therapeutics
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Franciscan Health
Genentech
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Team Building, Stealth Fighters, and the "Goldilocks" Patient: New Frontiers in Cellular Therapy

A Conversation with Dr. Matt Lunning

Written by: Nicola Donelan

In the rapidly evolving landscape of hematologic malignancies, Dr. Matt Lunning stands at the intersection of clinical excellence and operational innovation. As the Interim Chief and Professor in the UNMC Division of Hematology, Dr. Lunning's career has been defined by a "secret" start in biochemistry and a relentless pursuit of the next "future state." He shares his journey from writing case reports as a 20-year-old to leading groundbreaking trials in CAR-T therapy for autoimmune diseases.

The Power of Early Exposure

Dr. Lunning's trajectory began not in a sprawling academic center, but at his local community hospital in Mason City, Iowa where his mother has been a nurse for 45 years. He was a freshman in college and worked as a clinical research assistant in the cancer center where he learned the "operational back-end" of clinical trials.

"I was a secret pre-med," Lunning recalls of his undergraduate years as a biochemist. This dual identity allowed him to master the language of the bench—PCR and gels—while realizing his heart was at the bedside. Under the mentorship of Gerald Marti at the NIH, he was exposed to luminaries like Wyndham Wilson and Bruce Chesson at just 20 years old. This was the equivalent of a young physicist getting to study under Einstein or Hawking, and this cemented his lifelong commitment to studying lymphoid malignancies.

Caring for Patients is a Team Sport

If there is a central theme to Dr. Lunning's philosophy, it is that oncology is a team sport. Whether it is a clinical trial or a standard clinic day, Lunning views himself as a team builder.

"In oncology, it takes a village. To do one CAR-T cell, it takes dozens of hands and dozens of brains," he says. By involving everyone—from advanced practice providers and pharmacists to medical assistants and front-desk staff—he believes we can transform the most difficult times in a patient's life into an experience defined by mission and support.

In a field built on the shoulders of many, Dr. Lunning remains a steadfast advocate for patient access. *"A vast percentage of patients that have the opportunity to get to CAR T-cell, aren't actually getting to the CAR T-cell centers to have that discussion"* he explains. He is championing the move in a direction where those patients living hours away from a major medical center can benefit from the miracles of gene and cellular therapy.

CAR-T Beyond Cancer

One of the most exciting shifts in Dr. Lunning's research is the transition of using CAR-T therapies to treat solid tumors and autoimmune conditions like Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and Lupus. Lunning uses a series of military analogies to describe the evolution of these "living drugs":

- Autologous CAR-T (The F-16s): High-impact, but visible on the radar. They require lymphodepleting chemotherapy (the "fuel") to expand and can cause significant "collateral damage."

- **Allogeneic CAR-T (The B-2 Stealth Bombers):** These "off-the-shelf" cells go in undetected by the innate immune system, drop their payload, and exit. They offer the potential for re-dosing and, crucially, might eventually function without the need for toxic chemotherapy.

- **In-Vivo CAR-T (The Drones):** These involve vectors that transform cells already within the body, removing the need to manufacture CAR-Ts outside the patient altogether.

"I'm an oncologist who doesn't want to give chemotherapy to patients who don't have cancer," emphasizes Lunning. He is actively researching ways to avoid giving lymphodepleting chemotherapy to patients without cancer in order to deliver cellular therapies.

For autoimmune patients, Lunning seeks the "Goldilocks" patient: A patient with active, aggressive disease that is likely to result in significant morbidity, but they are still relatively healthy (organs are still functioning well) and can manage the risks associated with cellular therapy. The goal is stabilization, to prevent the MS patient from needing a wheelchair or the Lupus patient from requiring a kidney transplant.

The "Horse and Jockey" Debate in Frontline Lymphoma

As new data matures, Dr. Lunning notes a looming debate in the treatment of aggressive B-cell lymphomas. He describes the treatment regimen as the "horse" and the novel agent as the "jockey." The "horse" is the backbone treatment (the established standard treatment) of either R-CHOP or Pola-R-CHP, while the "jockey" is the novel agent (a new, experimental drug) such as Glofitamab, Epcoritamab, or Tafasitamab. Lunning points out the ongoing chaos created by different clinical trial designs for treating Diffuse Large B-Cell Lymphoma. For instance, while Tafasitamab + R-CHOP showed positive results, it wasn't tested against Pola-R-CHP (the "horse" that won the previous race). *"There's a debate looming globally on who was the best horse to ride and who's the best jockey,"* Lunning explains. He cautions that this isn't just a small difference in opinion, it is a deep structural divide that could change how lymphoma is treated depending on which side of the world a patient lives.

Closing Thoughts: Staying Curious

For the next generation of physicians, Dr. Lunning's advice is simple: Stay curious. *"Things that are not popular now may become popular in the future. Curiosity breeds the future state,"* he notes. He encourages clinicians to attend meetings and approach these learning opportunities from a lens of curiosity rather than judgment and use them as a chance to "tickle the neurons" and imagine what comes next.

A Tribute To Dr. Steven Coutre

Written by: Abbey Seuss

Steven Coutre was a remarkable man who left an enduring legacy in the medical field, profoundly impacting his patients, colleagues, students, those he taught and mentored, and his family and friends. Steve was a person who excelled across diverse fields, seamlessly balancing a professional legacy with a multifaceted life.

Within his personal life, Steve was a dedicated husband and father. He was committed to being present outside of work and being a close and reliable member of his family. He loved gardening and was a master of bee keeping, with up to eight hives in his yard, he harvested honey and shared his passion for his hobbies with his family, friends, and community.

Steve was born and raised in Illinois, and began his professional journey at Yale, pursuing medical training there that was the foundation for his illustrious career. Specializing in hematology, he focused on his work on chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL), a disease he was later diagnosed with. Renowned for his precision and dedication, he was a beloved figure in his community, known for treating each patient with singular attention and care. Steve's approach extended beyond treatment protocols: he was a pioneer in patient-centered care, ensuring that no question went unanswered, and no patient was overlooked. He was an innovator, playing a crucial role in developing treatment protocols that improved outcomes for countless patients. He served on multiple hospital and academic committees, where his high standards and unyielding dedication to progress was admired. He was dedicated to meaningful advancements, even when met with resistance, underscoring his belief that time was a resource too valuable to waste, especially when it could be spent saving lives.

Steve was not just a doctor to his patients, but was a source of unwavering support, spending as much time as needed to address their concerns and ensure their care. Steve's legacy lives on through the annual memorial lectures at the Indy Hematology Review, a testament to his lasting influence in both medicine and community life.

Steve's story is a reminder of the extraordinary things that can be achieved through dedication, curiosity, and compassion- a leader in every sense.

Poem by Ranjana Advani, MD for Steve Coutre, MD

Words do not do justice to describe Steve, our beloved friend
A colleague whose life came too prematurely to an end
This void is felt deeply in our hearts
Wherever you are, from us you will never be apart
Steve and I overlapped as fellows in hematology
A twinkle in his eye and characteristic grin, a brilliant colleague
Over the next few decades as faculty, we worked on trials closely together
Sharing the joy as we saw early signs of responses in CLL with the BTK inhibitor
Never afraid to call a spade a spade
He challenged bureaucracy night and day
His mind and thoughts were always precise and defined
His office is pristine with everything perfectly aligned
Where excellence was the way of life and clinical practice
Be it academics or tending to his cactus
There are no words that sum up your measure
You truly were a treasure
A life lived with endless grace and dignity
A role model for the next generations for eternity
Your legacy will be everlasting in the hematology fraternity

Ranjana Advani, MD, Saul A. Rosenberg Professor of Lymphoma, Stanford Cancer Institute

FDA Approvals - January 2025 – January 2026 for Hematology/Hematologic Malignancies

FDA approves daratumumab and hyaluronidase-fihj with bortezomib, lenalidomide, and dexamethasone for newly diagnosed multiple myeloma

On January 27, 2026, the Food and Drug Administration approved daratumumab and hyaluronidase-fihj (Darzalex Faspro, Janssen Biotech, Inc.) in combination with bortezomib, lenalidomide, and dexamethasone (VRd) for adults with newly diagnosed multiple myeloma who are ineligible for autologous stem cell transplant (ASCT).
DRIVE Score: 1

FDA approves lisocabtagene maraleucel for relapsed or refractory marginal zone lymphoma

On December 4, 2025, the Food and Drug Administration approved lisocabtagene maraleucel (Breyanzi, Juno Therapeutics, Inc., a Bristol-Myers Squibb Company) for adults with relapsed or refractory marginal zone lymphoma (MZL) who have received at least two prior lines of systemic therapy.
DRIVE Score: 3

FDA grants traditional approval to pirtobrutinib for chronic lymphocytic leukemia and small lymphocytic lymphoma

On December 3, 2025, the Food and Drug Administration granted traditional approval to pirtobrutinib (Jaypirca, Eli Lilly and Company) for adults with relapsed or refractory chronic lymphocytic leukemia or small lymphocytic lymphoma (CLL/SLL) who have previously been treated with a covalent BTK inhibitor. In 2023, FDA granted accelerated approval to pirtobrutinib for adults with CLL/SLL who have received at least two prior lines of therapy, including a BTK inhibitor and a BCL-2 inhibitor.
DRIVE Score: 0*

FDA approves epcoritamab-bysp for follicular lymphoma indications

On November 18, 2025, the Food and Drug Administration approved epcoritamab-bysp (Epkinly, Genmab US, Inc.) with lenalidomide and rituximab for relapsed or refractory follicular lymphoma (FL). The FDA also granted traditional approval to epcoritamab-bysp as monotherapy for relapsed or refractory FL after two or more lines of systemic therapy (epcoritamab-bysp was granted accelerated approval for this indication in 2024).
DRIVE Score: 1

FDA approves ziftomenib for relapsed or refractory acute myeloid leukemia with a NPM1 mutation

On November 13, 2025, the Food and Drug Administration approved ziftomenib (Komzifti, Kura Oncology, Inc.), a menin inhibitor, for adults with relapsed or refractory acute myeloid leukemia (AML) with a susceptible nucleophosmin 1 (NPM1) mutation who have no satisfactory alternative treatment options.
DRIVE Score: 1

FDA approves daratumumab and hyaluronidase-fihj for high-risk smoldering multiple myeloma

On November 6, 2025, the Food and Drug Administration approved daratumumab and hyaluronidase-fihj (Darzalex Faspro, Janssen Biotech, Inc.) for adults with high-risk smoldering multiple myeloma (SMM).
DRIVE Score: 3

FDA approves revumenib for relapsed or refractory acute myeloid leukemia with a susceptible NPM1 mutation

On October 24, 2025, the Food and Drug Administration approved revumenib (Revuforj, Syndax Pharmaceuticals,

Inc.), a menin inhibitor, for relapsed or refractory acute myeloid leukemia with a susceptible nucleophosmin 1 (NPM1) mutation in adult and pediatric patients 1 year and older who have no satisfactory alternative treatment options.
DRIVE Score: 0^{x}

FDA approves belantamab mafodotin-blmf for relapsed or refractory multiple myeloma

On October 23, 2025, the Food and Drug Administration approved belantamab mafodotin-blmf (Blenrep, GlaxoSmithKline), a B-cell maturation antigen (BCMA)-directed antibody and microtubule inhibitor conjugate, with bortezomib and dexamethasone for adults with relapsed or refractory multiple myeloma who have received at least two prior lines of therapy, including a proteasome inhibitor and an immunomodulatory agent.
DRIVE Score: 0*

FDA grants accelerated approval to linvoseltamab-gcpt for relapsed or refractory multiple myeloma

On July 2, 2025, the Food and Drug Administration granted accelerated approval to linvoseltamab-gcpt (Lynozyfic, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc.), a bispecific B-cell maturation antigen (BCMA)-directed CD3 T-cell engager, for adults with relapsed or refractory multiple myeloma who have received at least four prior lines of therapy, including a proteasome inhibitor (PI), an immunomodulatory agent (IMiD), and an anti-CD38 monoclonal antibody.
DRIVE Score: 3

FDA approves tafasitamab-cxix for relapsed or refractory follicular lymphoma

On June 18, 2025, the Food and Drug Administration approved tafasitamab-cxix (Monjuvi, Incyte Corporation) with lenalidomide and rituximab for adults with relapsed or refractory follicular lymphoma (FL).
DRIVE Score: 0*

FDA approves brentuximab vedotin with lenalidomide and rituximab for relapsed or refractory large B-cell lymphoma

On February 11, 2025, the Food and Drug Administration approved brentuximab vedotin (Adcetris, Seagen Inc., a subsidiary of Pfizer) in combination with lenalidomide and a rituximab product for adult patients with relapsed or refractory large B-cell lymphoma (LBCL), including diffuse large B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL) not otherwise specified (NOS), DLBCL arising from indolent lymphoma, or high-grade B-cell lymphoma (HGBL), after two or more lines of systemic therapy who are ineligible for autologous hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (auto-HSCT) or CAR T-cell therapy.
DRIVE Score: 0*

FDA approves treosulfan with fludarabine as a preparative regimen for alloHSCT in adult and pediatric patients with AML or MDS

On January 21, 2025, the Food and Drug Administration approved treosulfan (Grafapex, medac GmbH), an alkylating agent, with fludarabine as a preparative regimen for allogeneic hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (alloHSCT) in adult and pediatric patients 1 year of age and older with acute myeloid leukemia (AML) or myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS).
DRIVE Score not applicable to pediatric studies at this time.

FDA approves acalabrutinib with bendamustine and rituximab for previously untreated mantle cell lymphoma

On January 16, 2025, the Food and Drug Administration granted traditional approval to acalabrutinib (Calquence, AstraZeneca) with bendamustine and rituximab for adults with previously untreated mantle cell lymphoma (MCL) who are ineligible for autologous hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT).
DRIVE Score: 3

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An Interview with Tycel Phillips, MD

Written by: Nicola Donelan

In the high-stakes world of hematologic oncology, where survival statistics and clinical trial phases often dominate the conversation, Dr. Tycel Phillips offers a refreshing reminder of the human heartbeat driving the science. Currently a leading expert at City of Hope, Dr. Phillips has spent his career dismantling the complexities of Mantle Cell Lymphoma (MCL) and other B-cell malignancies.

A Career Born of Resilience

Originally from Chicago, Dr. Phillips' path into oncology was forged in the wake of tragedy. "A lot of this started, unfortunately, after my mother passed away from breast cancer after my intern year," he shares. The experience hit so close to home that he initially avoided breast cancer research entirely, eventually finding his calling in the robust malignant hematology programs at Case Western and later, the University of Michigan.

It was during his fellowship that he began "learning the ropes" of clinical trial development. He recalls the intense, close relationships formed during Phase 1 studies during trials where patients are often at the "end of the line" for standard treatments. This intimate perspective on patient struggle became the fuel for his specialization in MCL, a disease area that historically suffered from a lack of durable treatment options.

Defining the "Functional Cure"

When Dr. Phillips began his research in Michigan over a decade ago, the outlook for MCL patients who failed early BTK inhibitors like ibrutinib was grim. "We really had nothing that worked back then," he admits. However, the landscape has shifted dramatically. Today, he points to three pillars of hope that are redefining remission rates: Second-generation BTK Inhibitors, Bispecific Antibodies and CAR T-cell Therapies. "We're looking at some patients who have been in remission going on six plus years now," Dr. Phillips says. "That is something I would have never imagined back then." However, Dr. Phillips emphasizes that until we can cure patients, the job is not done. While the word "cure" is often used cautiously in oncology, Dr. Phillips offers a pragmatic and compassionate perspective of the functional cure. "If a patient can enjoy a good quality of life, and pass of natural causes I think we've done our job," he says. This focus on quality of life remains a cornerstone of his philosophy at City of Hope, where he continues to push for "chemotherapy-free" regimens that minimize the toxic toll on the body.

The Power of Mentorship and Paying it Forward

A central element to success is the series of mentors who lend their support along one's career journey. During his fellowship at Case Western, he credits Paul Barr and Erica Campanero with steering his focus toward lymphoma, while Brenda Cooper provided the foundational guidance for his entry into clinical trial development. This trajectory was further refined by Moshe Talpaz at the University of Michigan, who mentored him for a decade, teaching him the "ropes" of early-phase trials and the nuances of patient care in high-stakes Phase 1 studies. Now at City of Hope, Dr. Phillips emphasizes that he stands "on the backs of others," and he views paying this mentorship forward to the next generation as an essential responsibility.

Find Your Passion: A Message to the Next Generation of Physicians

Despite the bureaucratic and financial hurdles of modern medicine, Dr. Phillips' advice to young physicians is simple: "Find Your Passion". He acknowledges that the time commitment is immense and institutional gratitude is rare. The true reward, he says, is found in experiencing the joys of his patients' lives stemming from another Christmas spent with family, attending a wedding, welcoming children and grandchildren when they thought that there would not be able to survive long enough to have these cherished moments.
As Dr. Phillips continues his work at City of Hope, his goal remains clear: to pay it forward, mentoring the next generation to ensure that one day, the cancer "conundrums" of today are the cures of tomorrow.

3 ways to contact Indy Hematology Review
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Indy Hematology Education, Inc, is a 501(c)(3), non-profit corporation, incorporated on February 15, 2010, in the State of Indiana, with the following purposes:

(a) Raise awareness and provide education regarding hematology and oncology diseases and disorders.

(b) To encourage youth to pursue careers in hematology and oncology, and

(c) To connect individuals suffering from or affected by hematology and oncology diseases and disorders to organizations, programs, and service providers.

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Thalia Hammond
Indy Hematology Education Inc.
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Indy Hematology Education, Inc.
Chief Program Officer

Central Indiana Oncology Nursing Society

Emerging Therapies

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

My thoughts

The Indy Hematology Review 2026 meeting has resulted in the presentation of amazing clinical data that would certainly continue to alter the outcomes of our patients and thus, using education today would ultimately result in improved clinical results in the future. Below are my thoughts on the data presented at the 2026 meeting.

Practice Changing:

Epcoritamab +Lenalidomide + Rituximab in R/R Follicular Lymphoma
Teclistimab and daratumumab in R/R multiple myeloma
Venetoclax and azacitabine in IC-eligible AML
Firstline Ponatinib+Blinatumomab in Ph+ ALL
Firstline and Second line Pirtobrutinib in CLL
Lenalidomide + Ibrutinib+ MTR in PCNSL
Orca-T (T-Reg) cell therapy in AlloHSCT
Ianalumab in R/R Chronic ITP
Teclistimab and talquetamab in Extramedullary myeloma

Potentially Practice Changing:

Tagraxofusp, azacitidine plus venetoclax in Blastic Plasmacytoid Dendritic Cell Neoplasm
Inotuzumab ozogamicin + Blinatumomab for frontline elderly ALL
MaaT013 allogeneic microbiotherapy for ruxolitinib-refractory GI-aGVHD

Practice Confirming:

Nivolumab-AVD in Hodgkin's lymphoma
BreCADD in Hodgkin's lymphoma
Hydroxyurea safety in pregnancy in SCD
Asciminib therapy in CML
Allotransplantation in Myelofibrosis
Mismatched MUDs beyond 7/8 loci
Bezuclastinib in non-Advanced Systemic Mastocytosis
Benralizumab in Hypereosinophilic Syndrome
CLL-17: Equivalence of time-limited versus continuous BTKi therapy in CLL

Stay Tuned:

INCA033989: Mutant CALR-specific monoclonal antibody in ET/MF
Single CAR-T after induction therapy in ND-ALL
Venetoclax in fit patients with AML
BTG-16673 (BTKi Degrader) in CLL and Waldenström Macroglobulinemia
Time limited therapy in CLL with BTKi therapy alone

Ruemu Ejedafeta Birhiray, MD

Saturday CME Programming

Continuing Education

Needs – Multiple topics in Hematology, on the diagnosis and treatment of cancers healthcare providers will see in practice. Review the agenda for specific topics.

Learning Objectives (ACCME, MOC, ANCC, ACPE) – Upon completion of this activity, the participant should be able to:

1. Evaluate and integrate emerging clinical trial data and practice-changing updates from the 2025–2026 ASH Annual Meeting into evidence-based management strategies for patients with hematologic malignancies.
2. Apply evidence supporting of novel therapeutic agents- including targeted therapies, bispecific antibodies, and cellular therapies- to optimize treatment selection, sequencing, and management of relapsed and refractory hematologic malignancies.
3. Incorporate current diagnostic and prognostic testing, including molecular, cytogenetic, and biomarker based assessments, to guide risk-adapted therapy selection and disease monitoring.
4. Identify and apply contemporary diagnostic and therapeutic strategies for managing rare and emerging hematologic disorders including VEXAS syndrome, amyloidosis, and complementopathies.
5. Differentiate indications, timing, and management considerations for cellular and immune effector therapies, including CAR-T and bispecific antibodies, across hematologic malignancies and clinical settings.

Joint Accreditation Statement – In support of improving patient care, this activity has been planned and implemented by the Postgraduate Institute for Medicine and Indy Hematology Education. Postgraduate Institute for Medicine is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

IHE Review Faculty (Subject to change)

- Ruemu Birhiray, MD
- Rami Komrokji, MD
- Guillermo Garcia-Manero, MD
- Richard Larson, MD
- Neal Young, MD
- Robert Brodsky, MD
- Craig Kessler, MD, MACP
- Lorenzo Falchi, MD
- Kenneth Anderson, MD
- Saad Usmani, MD, MBA, FACP, FRCP
- Steven P. Treon, MD, MA, PhD, FRCP, FACP
- Joselle Cook, MD
- Morie Gertz, MD, MACP
- Martin Dreyling, MD
- Tracy Batchelor, MD, MPH
- Richard Stone, MD
- Naveen Pemmaraju, MD
- Jennifer Woyach, MD
- Gilles Salles, MD, PhD
- Stephen Ansell, MD, PhD
- Sonali Smith, MD, FASCO
- Tycel Phillips, MD
- Matthew Lunning, DO, FACP
- Raajit Rampal, MD, PhD
- Richard Childs, MD

Nursing & Allied Providers Faculty (Subject to change)

- Ruemu Birhiray, MD
- David Reeves, PharmD, BCOP
- Kristi K Orbaugh, RN, MSN, RNP, AOCNP
- Mary Allen, BSN, MSN
- Ellen Dillard, MSN, APRN, FNP-C
- Cassandra Perkey, PharmD, BCOP
- Madison Moser, BSN, RN
- Sandra Garofalo, MS, APRN, AOCNP
- Muna Chemali, PharmD, BCOP
- Esta Works, MSN, BSN
- Leigh Flegge-Schlie, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC
- Sarah Knight, MPAS, PA-C
- Meaghan Wiggins, LMHC, OPN-CG

Please complete the evaluation to receive CE credit

SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION – In order to receive CE, all participants must attend the entire Symposium from 7:30 am – 8:30 pm AND complete a Post-Evaluation.

Americans with Disabilities Act – Event staff will be glad to assist you with any special needs (i.e., physical, dietary, etc). Please contact Sam Ranger prior to the live event at (463) 316-2050 or email general@indyhematology.org.

Physician Continuing Medical Education – The Postgraduate Institute for Medicine designates this live activity for a maximum of 11 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™*. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Nurses Accreditation Statement – The maximum number of hours awarded for this Continuing Nursing Education activity is 8.25 contact hours.

Continuing Pharmacy Education – Postgraduate Institute for Medicine designates this continuing education activity for 8.25 contact hour(s) (8.5 CEUs) of the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education.
Universal Activity Number - **Not yet determined**
Type of Activity: **Application**

Disclosure of Financial Relationships – Postgraduate Institute for Medicine (PIM) requires faculty, planners, and others in control of educational content to disclose all their financial relationships with ineligible companies. All identified financial relationships are thoroughly vetted and mitigated according to PIM policy. PIM is committed to providing its learners with high quality accredited continuing education activities and related materials that promote improvements or quality in healthcare and not a specific proprietary business interest of an ineligible company.

All relevant conflicts of interest will have been mitigated prior to the start of the activity. – The PIM planners and others have nothing to disclose. The Indy Hematology Education planners and others have nothing to disclose.

All relevant financial relationships have been mitigated.

In order to obtain your CE certificate, please go to indyhematology.org/review and select the link to view step-by-step CE instructions. This link will be available following the event.
The evaluation will open on Saturday, March 7, 2026 at 11:59 PM

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